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AN

ANALYSIS

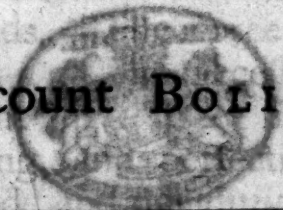
ADVERTISEMENT

OF THE

PHILOSOPHICAL WORKS

OF THE LATE

Lord Viscount BOLINGBROKE.



DUBLIN:

Printed for THOMAS WATSON, at the *Poets*
Heads in *Capel-street*. MDCCLVI.

85

ANALYSIS

OF THE

PHILOSOPHICAL WORKS

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THE works here analized are the five volumes published in octavo; and no notice is taken of any thing in them, but what relates to religion natural and revealed. What his Lordship has allowed in favour of these, is first set in one view, under the following heads. The force of prejudices and passions . . . The necessity of religion to government . . . The nature of man . . . The being, and perfections, and providence of God, and our duty to Him . . . Future rewards and punishments . . . Of angels and demons . . . The want, and expediency, and authority of a revelation . . . The proper proofs of Divine Revelation . . . Of the canon of Scripture . . . Of Moses, his history, and law . . . Of Jesus Christ, and his apostles . . . The truth, perfection, and usefulness of Christianity . . . Grace, Mysteries, and sacraments . . . The clergy, external religion, and the reformation . . .

Afterwards, these particulars are severally reviewed; the just consequences of his Lord-

ship's concessions shewn; and the chief things, which he has thought proper to urge against them regularly extracted. These also are shortly and candidly answered, either from his own words, or from other considerations, in the plainest manner.

This is the design, and the method, of the following treatise. May the reader find it useful and satisfactory?

A N

ANALYSIS, &c.

I.

The force of prejudices and passions.

THE more important notions are, the Vol. I.
more liable they are likewise to be p. 13.
abused by prejudices and habits, that
infect the mind, and put a wrong bias on
it.

Human affections and passions mingle in p. 55.
their enquiries, as they often do; for philo-
sophers are not free from them.

Our affections and passions put frequently Vol. II.
a bias so secret, and yet so strong, on our P. 91.
judgments, as to make them swerve from the
direction of right reason.

II.

The necessity of religion to government.

CIVIL government cannot subsist well Vol. I.
without religion. p. 326.

A community of Atheists never existed out Vol. II.
of Mr. Bayle's head. p. 228.

That religion is necessary to strengthen Vol. III.
government cannot be denied. p. 45.

p. 67. The good effects of maintaining, and the bad effects of neglecting religion, had been extremely visible in the whole course of the Roman government.

p. 330. To make government effectual to all the good purposes of it, there must be a religion; this natural religion must be national; and the national religion must be maintained in reputation and reverence; all other religions or sects must be kept too low to become the rivals of it. These are, in my apprehension, first principles of good policy.

p. 331. A test and toleration, the two most compatible things in the world.

Vol. IV. In the world ancient and modern, the
p. 394 general state of mankind increases in happiness, or declines to misery, as virtue or vice prevails in their several societies.

III.

The nature of Man.

Vol. I. **T**HE sole criterion we have of immaterial
p. 101. spirit is our own spirit.

p. 206. That we live, and move, and think according to certain human modes of thinking, and that there must be something in the constitution of our system of being, beyond the known properties of matter, to produce such phænomena, as these, are undeniable truths.

p. 226. We have clear and determinate ideas of what we call body by sensation, and of what we call spirit by reflection.

p. 263. I would ask, whether the conscious knowledge we have of the reciprocal action of body and mind be not founded in greater certainty,

certainty, than the knowledge we should have of the conatus accedendi, this mutual tendency of body to body? It must be allowed to be so.

The argument, which may be drawn from the intelligence whereof we are conscious, to a First Intelligence, infinite, and eternal, which is the original of all intelligence, and the first cause of all things, is plain and obvious to the conception of every rational creature.

Man is owned to be placed in the lowest rank of intelligent beings and moral agents.

Intellect is certainly above the mere powers of motion and figure, according to all the ideas we have of them.

Reason we say is peculiar to man; and so we may say properly enough, whether we conceive this faculty in man and beast to be wholly different in kind, or whether we conceive it to be vastly transcendent in man.

Man is most apparently superior to other animals, . . . the principal inhabitant of this planet.

Men have more to learn and more to do than other animals, are prepared for a more improved state, and for greater happiness.

His happiness exceeds that of his fellow creatures, at least as much as the dignity of his nature exceeds the dignity of theirs.

God, when he gave us reason, left us to our freewill to make a proper or improper use of it: so that we are obliged to our Creator for a certain rule and sufficient means of arriving at happiness, and have none to blame but ourselves, when we fail of it.

Vol. V. **Man is a religious, as well as a social**
 P. 97. creature, made to know and to adore his
 Creator, to discover and to obey his will.

P. 98. Greater powers of reason, and means of
 knowledge, have been measured out to us
 than to other animals, that we might be
 able to fulfill the superior purposes of our
 destination, whereof religion is, no doubt,
 the chief.

IV.

*The being and perfections and providence of
 God, and our duty to him.*

Vol. II. **T**O say that God was known and not
 P. 218. worshipped, is little less absurd, than it
 would be to say, that he was worshipped and
 not known.

P. 232. The knowledge and worship of the one
 true God must have been known from
 the beginning, by all the people of the
 earth.

P. 278. Our reason is sufficient, unassisted, to de-
 monstrate what is necessary concerning God's
 existence, nature, and attributes, his provi-
 dence over his creatures, and their duties to
 him and one another.

Vol. III. That men should worship and obey God,
 P. 388. is as fit, as it is true that they depend upon
 him.

P. 392. Even on the supposition of eternal neces-
 sary differences, and independent natures, it
 would be still true, that the will of God con-
 stitutes the obligation of duty.

Vol. IV. Of the fitness of God's acting we are in no
 P. 19. degree competent judges.

God

God is the first and greatest object of our gratitude, resignation, and hope, and addresses. p. 30.

The religion of nature teaches to worship God in spirit and in truth, i. e. inwardly and sincerely. p. 31.

To keep up a due sense of our dependance on God, for which purpose prayer may be a very useful, and consequently a very rational, expedient, is the duty of every man. p. 175.

There are no arguments but à posteriori, to prove the first cause to be intelligent. p. 223.

A necessary connection between the natural and moral attributes of God, no man who believes in him will deny. p. 224.

The care of man has not been neglected by God . . . God neither contrives nor executes like man. His means are simple, his purposes various ; and the same system, that answers the greatest, answers the least. p. 326.

The wisdom is not so often discernable by us, as the power of God ; nor the goodness, as the wisdom. But a multitude of the phænomena being conformable to our ideas of goodness, it is the highest absurdity not to acknowledge it in all . . . More good than evil here experienced. p. 328.

The evils, which may be said to come from God, are, for the most part, soon over; but ambition, avarice, and other ruling passions, are never sated : and the same persons expose themselves anew and continually, to all the evils that accompany the pursuit of them. p. 337.

How should finite measure infinite? God's manner of knowing is ours no more, than his manner of being. p. 355.

p. 388. Mens greatest evils are from themselves, not from God . . . General calamities may be considered as chastisements ; for chastisements are reasonable, when there are any to be amended by partaking in them, or by being at least spectators of them : in this light they should teach mankind to adore and to fear that Providence, which governs the world by particular as well as general dispensations.

p. 396. I should rouse in my mind a grateful sense of these advantages above all others ; that I am a creature capable of knowing, of adoring, and worshipping my Creator, capable of discovering his will in the law of my nature, and capable of promoting my happiness by obeying it.

Vol. V. I do not deny particular providences.

p. 143. To keep up a belief of particular providences, serves to keep up a belief . . . of the efficacy of prayer . . . and of the rites of external devotion.

p. 95. In the works of men, the most complicated schemes produce very hardly and very uncertainly, one single effect. In the works of God, one single scheme produces a multitude of different effects, and answers an immense variety of purposes.

p. 148. We must believe, if we think worthily of the Supreme Being, that he will not proceed with his human creatures, in any state, in violation of that justice which he has constituted in the nature of things, and whereof he has made them able to acquire ideas and notions.

p. 168. By natural religion we are taught to ascribe goodness and justice to God, wherever he intended

intended that we should so ascribe them, i. e. wherever either his works or the dispensations of his providence do as necessarily communicate these notions to our minds, as those of wisdom and power are communicated to us in the whole extent of both.

An all-perfect, self-existent Being, the source of all existence, invisible and incomprehensible; the author, not only of all that is visible and comprehensible to his creatures, but of all that is in the whole extent of nature, whether visible or comprehensible to them or not;

I incline to think, that the unity of a First Intelligent Cause, was the original belief of mankind.

V.

Future rewards and punishments.

I would not deny the immortality of the soul.

The doctrine of future rewards and punishments (which is no doubt a great restraint on men) supposes the immortality of the soul.

By the heathen mysteries . . . to enforce lessons of morality and habits of piety, that great sanction, which consists in the rewards and punishments of another life, and which had been added very wisely to the law of nature . . . was inculcated so, that every man must apply it to himself.

Sanctions of this law are implied in the theistical scheme . . . hence future rewards and punishments invented . . . secret thoughts thus affected.

The

Vol. III. The sanction of the law of religion is eternal punishments in another life.

P. 374. God has given us a manner of knowing fitted to our system, and sufficient for all our real business in it. We can conceive no other. But is there then no other?

Vol. IV. Rewards and punishments in a future state
P. 206. began to be taught long before we have any light into antiquity; and when we begin to have any, we find it established . . . This owing to a natural desire to exist.

P. 207. This belief could not fail to have some effect on the manners of men, to encourage virtue, and to restrain vice.

P. 311. Reason will not deny that there is to be a future state: and the doctrine of rewards and punishments in it has so great a tendency to enforce civil laws, and to restrain the vices of men, that reason . . . will not decide against it on principles of good policy. Let this doctrine rest on the authority of revelation. A theist, who does not believe the revelation, can have no objection to the doctrine in general.

P. 324. Different natures designed for different purposes.

P. 346. No doctrines more inculcated than those of a future state . . . which excited devotion.

P. 398. We wish to be immortal . . . Nonentity is not reconcileable to my inward sentiment.

Vol. V. The opinion of the terrors of another life
P. 121. . . . would do some good most certainly, and it could do no hurt.

P. 125. The ancient and modern Epicureans provoke my indignation, when they boast, as a mighty acquisition, their pretended certainty, that the body and soul dye together. If they

they had this certainty then, would the discovery be so very comfortable?

To reform offenders is neither the sole, p. 144. nor the principal, end of punishments. Those of an inferior kind may have this intention. Those that are capital, must have some other . . . The criminal is executed for the sake of others.

Clandestine punishments may contribute, p. 145. in some degree to the good of society, by putting out of it such as are hurtful to it.

There may be rewards and punishments, p. 215. reserved in another life.

. . . on the Jews, terrors of punishment, p. 356. future as well as present, eternal as well as temporary, could never be too much multiplied, nor too strongly inculcated.

VI.

Of angels and demons.

THE distinction of the good and evil de- Vol. II. mons . . . had been established in the p. 20. remotest antiquity.

There may be created minds or intelligences much superior to ours. p. 146.

We hold no very exalted rank among the p. 278. intellectual creatures of God.

There is a gradation from man, through Vol. IV. various forms of sense, intelligence, and p. 320. reason, up to beings, who cannot be known by us, because of their distance from us, and whose rank in the intellectual system is even above our conception.

VII.

VII.

The want and expediency and authority of a revelation.

Vol. I. **I**T may be said, that an extraordinary
p. 154. action of God on the human mind, which the word inspiration is now used to denote, is not more inconceivable than the ordinary action of mind on body, and of body on mind: and I confess that it is not.

p. 268. It would be for the interest of the immateriality and immortality of the soul, and by consequence of the rewards and punishments of a future state, and several other doctrines, to let them rest on the authority of revelation . . . revelation apart, there is no positive or determining proof of any of these doctrines.

Vol. II. When a revelation has all the authenticity
p. 282. of human testimony, when it appears consistent in all its parts, and when it contains nothing inconsistent with any real knowledge, which we have of the supreme all-perfect Being, and of natural religion, such a revelation is to be received with the most profound reverence, the most entire submission, and the most unfeigned thanksgiving.

Vol. II. Revelation was given to enforce the practice of morality by a superior authority.
p. 306.

p. 371. When the truth of a revelation is established, we are to believe implicitly.

p. 386. The authority of revelation confirming that of Plato.

p. 390. There are many things unintelligible in the ancient philosophers, many inconsistent and contradictory, even among those who wrote

wrote with the greatest clearness and precision ; for I except neither Cicero nor Seneca.

... the two noblest gifts of God to man, Vol. III. natural reason, and supernatural revelation. p. 309.

The law of nature is not universally known. Vol. IV. p. 22.

The first principles of every thing, that requires human understanding, and human industry to be employed about, are rightly laid in nature ; they are obvious to our search, and we are able to discover and pursue the consequences of them in speculation and in practice. But in doing this, we are left, as I may say, to ourselves. We owe the first discoveries to our own observation, and the progress we make afterwards to the strength of our own understandings, to our application and industry. We may do this well or ill ; we may do too little or attempt too much, according to the use, and the right or wrong judgment we make of our faculties ; for the bona et mala ratio, that Cotta insists upon so much, is nothing else.

... reason not given to all alike. p. 98.

The law is plain, but the precepts it contains are general. p. 101.

Expiatory sacrifices owned to be ancient and universal. p. 173.

Plato insinuates in many places, the want or the necessity of a divine revelation to discover the external service God requires, and the expiation for sin, to give stronger assurances of the rewards and punishments that await men in another world. . . . and to frame

frame a system of God's government in heaven and earth.

- p. 181. In natural theology the knowledge of the philosophers was confined to a very few general propositions.
- p. 186. The heathen philosophers had not sufficient means of reforming mankind.
- p. 245. As nothing should be neglected, that may enforce moral obligations, and all the duties of natural religion, so nothing may seem in speculation so proper to this purpose as a true revelation, or a revelation believed to be true.
- p. 252. Reason is sober and modest. She never affects to lead men beyond her bounds, but delivers them over to revelation.
- p. 350. A future state was sanctified by revelation . . . with the immortality of the soul. Thus these deserve our respect, and challenge the implicit belief of every christian.
- p. 351. Some theists rather hoped, than believed, the immortality of the soul.
- p. 396. No perfect virtue to be found among the sons of men.

VIII.

The proper proofs of divine revelation.

- Vol. II. **M**iracles, real miracles can be operated by no power, but that of God.
- p. 213.
- Vol. V. High probability must stand often in lieu of certainty; or we must be, every moment, at a loss how to form our opinions, and to regulate our conduct.
- p. 231.
- p. 232. A fact, of which we find no precise example within our knowledge, may have a conformity properly so called, with our experience

perience . . . we may discover, in our experience, none of the same sort; and yet none, that imply contradiction with it. p. 233.

I consult my reason, indeed, to examine, whether the fact implies contradiction; no more: and when I find that it does not, I receive it for true, on the faith of human testimony, which is the proper proof to me of every fact, whereof I have not been myself a witness. p. 304.

IX.

Of the Canon of Scripture.

THE Bible is to be believed.

Vol. II.

p. 211.

I assert the authority of the Bible, and endeavour to place it out of the reach of cavil, p. 215.

The Epistles were written . . . before St. John died. p. 338.

St. Matthew's and St. John's accounts of Christ's acts and doctrines are true. Vol. III. p. 19.

Christianity every where supposes the authenticity and divinity of the Jewish Scripture. p. 20.

The Apocalypse passed for a composition of the Evangelists, and maintained great credit, as such, in the church for some centuries before the council of Laodicea, A. D. 360. p. 39.

I do indeed admit the gospels on the testimony of the fathers and doctors of the church, who not only bear this testimony separately; but assembled in a council at Laodicea, rejecting many other gospels, made a canon of these. p. 332.

A same-

Vol. V. A fameness of spirit runs through all the
P. 353. history of Moses, and appears in all the
writings of the Jewish prophets.

X.

Of Moses, his history, and law.

Vol. I. **G**OD is said to have given himself a
P. 318. name to Moses, a very magnificent one
indeed, and such a one as might denote the
Supreme Being The least part of
Moses's miracles sufficient to draw all nations
from polytheism.

Vol. II. Christianity founded on the Jewish religion.
P. 333. and Scripture. See III. 20.

Vol. IV. Moses proved his mission by miracles.

P. 145. A future state was not revealed to Moses.

P. 209. He therefore made a scruple of teaching it.

P. 263. The account of the fall of man is the
foundation of the fundamental article of the
redemption by Christ.

P. 317. God is not cruel or unjust, because he has
not given us impeccable natures.

Vol. V. Certain it is, that the traditions of the
P. 253. Pentateuch are of very great antiquity.

P. 298. The lives of the first men were probably
much longer than ours.

P. 334. Christianity was founded on Judaism, and
the New Testament supposes the truth of the
Old.

P. 347. That the Israelites had a leader and
legislator called Moses, is proved by the
consent of foreign, whom I call collateral
witnesses.

P. 357. The law of the Jews exacted from them
all the duties necessary to maintain peace and
good order among themselves.

There

There are many passages in Job, in p. 368. Isaiah, in the Psalms, and in other parts of the Old Testament, which give most sublime ideas of the majesty of the Supreme Being.

Was it necessary, that Moses should explain the Copernican system? No, most certainly. p. 370.

XI.

Of Jesus Christ and his Apostles.

THE Divinity of our Saviour was sufficiently manifested under the disguise of humanity. Vol. II. p. 261.

Christ taught the duties of natural religion with evangelical simplicity. p. 297.

Christ certainly had not any need of repentance. p. 312.

The article of Jesus being the Messiah the primary, but not the sole, object of our faith. p. 328.

St. Paul's gospel was, in the fundamental principles of it, the same as the other Apostles. p. 346.

Sabellianism gave occasion to Arianism. p. 398.

Christ was the greatest of preachers. Vol. III.

Christ was at least the Messiah promised by God, foretold by the prophets, and sent in due time. p. 25. p. 143.

The son of God, God himself. p. 312.

The law of grace, [viz. Christ's decision about divorces] was superior in time, [viz. became in time more respected,] to the natural and Mosaical law, among Christians. Vol. IV. p. 122.

It had a right to be so.

St.

- P. 144. St. Paul does not, I think, prescribe any thing directly opposite to the law of nature, as the command of God to man.
- P. 145. The Apostles healed the lame, they cured the blind, and even raised the dead, to prove their mission.
- P. 232. The Son of God, God himself, came upon earth, was born of a woman, lived among men, preached a new covenant, wrought miracles, sent his disciples to all nations, who established his church among them.

XII.

The truth, perfection and usefulness of Christianity.

- Vol. II. **T**HAT our Saviour found the whole world in a state of error concerning the first principle of natural religion . . . is allowed ; and that the spreading of Christianity has contributed to destroy polytheism and idolatry, is true.
- P. 234.
- P. 235. Christ, his Apostles, and the first preachers of Christianity, established this religion by their miracles, and by their sufferings.
- P. 259. When we consider the great and glorious purposes of this revelation, the manner in which, and the Person, even the Son of God himself, by whom it was made ; and all the stupendous miracles in the heavens, and on earth, which were wrought to confirm it
- p. 268. It is for the honour of Christianity to stand such examinations, as every pretended revelation declines.

No religion ever appeared in the world, p. 286.
whose natural tendency was so much directed
to promote the peace and happiness of man-
kind, as the Christian.

Christianity is founded on the universal p. 287.
law of nature . . . teaches the great and
fundamental principle of this law universal
benevolence ; recommends the precepts of
it, and commands the observation of them
in particular instances occasionally, always
supposes them, always enforces them, and
makes the law of right reason a law, in
every possible definition of the word, beyond
all cavil.

The system of religion, which Christ p. 329.
published, and his Evangelists recorded, is a
complete system to all the purposes of true
religion natural and revealed . . . Christ pro-
ved his assertions by his miracles.

Genuine Christianity was taught by God. p. 374.

Supposing Christianity to have been pure- Vol. III.
ly an human invention, it had been the most p. 24-
amiable and the most useful invention, that
was ever imposed upon mankind for their
good.

Christianity born, if I may say so, in a Vol. III.
desert, and educated in a little province of p. 68.
the empire, had spread thro' the whole in
the course of three centuries . . . beyond the p. 83.
bounds of it.

A system of human law is the product of p. 312.
human understanding, and therefore incom-
plete and imperfect, liable to different con-
structions at all times, and fit to be altered
at some. But this cannot be said without
blasphemy of the Christian dispensation.

Christianity,

- p. 331. Christianity, genuine Christianity, is contained in the Gospels. It is the word of God : it requires therefore our veneration, and a strict conformity to it.
- Vol. IV. Christianity has all those proofs, which the
- p. 22. manner in which it was revealed, and the nature of it allowed it to have.
- p. 23. It was confirmed by miracles, and the proof was no doubt sufficient for the conversion of all those, who heard the publication of this doctrine, and saw the confirmation of it.
- p. 143. A Christian professes a religion promulgated by God himself, and in every point conformable to the law of nature.
- p. 144. The gospel of Christ is one continued lesson of the strictest morality, of justice, of benevolence, and of universal charity.
- p. 191. Imitating God owned to be among the most refined precepts of Christian morality.
- p. 229. Under the Jewish and Christian dispensations all the knowledge, and all the means, which are assumed to be necessary, and to have been deficient in the state of paganism, as well as some means really wanting to the philosophers, were amply supplied.
- Vol. V. Future rewards and punishments are sanctions of the evangelical law.
- p. 151. Your divines, as well as ours, affirm very truly of the preceptive parts, that tho' natural and revealed religion are distinct, yet the difference between them is not a difference of opposition.
- p. 205. Meekness and humility, forgiveness of injuries, and benevolence exalted into charity, are the great characteristics of the Christian religion.

XIII.

Grace, Mysteries, Sacraments, &c.

IT is impossible to extinguish lust in the Vol. II.
heart without an assistance unknown to p. 308.
reason.

I do not mean to exclude absolutely the Vol. III.
influence of grace in making converts to p. 4.
Christianity, tho' I confess that I have no
conception of it.

The Sacraments of Baptism, and the Vol. II.
Lord's Supper certainly divine ceremonies. p. 311.

The Sacraments were not only innocent, p. 313.
but profitable ceremonies, because they were
extremely proper to keep up the spirit of
true natural religion by keeping up that of
Christianity.

Many doctrines in the Gospel, which p. 334.
reason would never have taught, nor is able
to comprehend now they are taught.

The manner of being of truths being still p. 346.
a mystery, is no objection to the belief of
any thing contained in a revelation once
proved to be divine.

Man was, according to the Semi-pelagi- Vol. III.
ans, to co-operate with God; and salvation p. 171.
was open to all who did so. This doctrine
appears moderate, reasonable, and no way
repugnant to the ideas of divine justice and
goodness.

Nothing more intelligible and reasonable, p. 278.
than the institution of the Lord's Supper,
since the sole design of it was, that Chri-
stians should commemorate in common the
death of Christ, and the redemption of
mankind,

mankind, as well as signify that they were of the same religion.

P. 415. Surely to put the system of divine wisdom in execution, and to co-operate with the Creator, is honour enough for the creature.

Vol. IV. There is, and there needs must be, something marvelous in revelation.

Vol. V. I may admit . . . that things intirely and

P. 193. exactly consistent with the law of nature, may be superadded to it by the same divine authority, though not in a manner equally authentic, and that positive precepts may be given about things, which are indifferent by the law of our nature: and which become obligatory as soon as they are enjoined by such positive precepts.

p. 225. There are secrets of the divine nature and œconomy, which human reason cannot penetrate.

XIV.

The Clergy, external Religion, the Reformation.

Vol. II. OUR divines themselves exhort us to examine.

P. 325. The solemn magnificence of a church, the grave and moving harmony of music, the pomp and order of ceremonies decently performed, the composed looks, and the mystical vestments of the priests who perform them; all this, I think, cannot fail to inspire an awful respect, and to maintain a devout attention of mind in the generality.

Vol. III. A respect for religion begat a respect for the clergy.

A clergy

A clergy might co-operate with the civil p. 50. magistrate, very usefully no doubt, by exhortations and reproofs, and much more by example, in subordination to him.

Christ sent out his apostles to teach and to p. 57. baptize; and the utmost power he gave them, besides that of working miracles to convince and to convert, was to shake off the dust of their feet . . . the apostles ordained others to succeed them.

The ecclesiastical authority of the clergy p. 81. was necessary before Christianity was established by Constantine.

The Clergy were all Bishops, *i. e.* over- p. 186. seers alike, and co-equal in rank and power, till factions arising, one presbyter was appointed by the apostles, or chosen by the faithful, to govern the rest, and was styled the Bishop *eminentiæ gratiâ*.

The state of Christianity has been mended p. 292. to the honor of religion, and to the good of mankind, by the reformation, in some particulars.

Christ gave his apostles a commission to p. 295. preach and to baptize, to convert men by the miracles they wrought, and to edify and build up in the faith such as they converted. It does not appear, that they, or their immediate successors, exceeded the bounds of this commission.

Ecclesiastics took the lead in reforming p. 297. Christianity.

The institution of synagogues, after the Vol. V. return from the captivity was an effectual p. 364. means to secure the observance of the law.

THE foregoing pages owe their rise to a very careful perusal of the Volumes from which they are extracted. The late right honourable author wrote in the essay way; and, as he frequently observes, according to the freedom of conversation, not strictly attending to the laws of method. On this account, I thought that it might be both proper and necessary to reduce what he has dispersed in many places to some order, and carefully to compare the passages together. This seemed to be the right way of doing him and the truth both justice. This I have therefore endeavoured to do. The method above will I hope be allowed to be extremely plain and regular, and at the same time to be comprehensive enough to take in the chief points of both natural and revealed religion. I have generally given his Lordship's own words; and in the few places where I have only represented his meaning, or presumed to make any alteration in them, I hope I cannot be charged with mistaking his sense. His irony is, I know, very strong. And sometimes he may be thought to make concessions purely for the sake of argument. But in the far greater number of these extracts, I may say in almost all, he appears to be as serious as he ever is, in any part of these philosophical works. Nor can we think otherwise of him, without accusing him of continual trifling with his correspondents, and with his readers.

If it be said, as doubtless it will be said, that in other parts of these books there are many passages irreconcilable with those here produced; nay, that the whole design
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and tenor of them appears evidently to be to weaken and destroy the credit of most of the articles abovementioned; I must confess, and it is with concern and regret, that I find myself obliged to confess, that the fact is so . . . To what purpose then, it may be asked, is this trouble taken to extract and methodize so many passages, if they will not, after all, shew the real sentiments of the author; or if we cannot collect his authority from them, and plead it in defence of our holy religion? . . . I can answer very truly, that they were at first drawn together out of curiosity, and to help my own memory. And they were now published in hopes of communicating some satisfaction to others.

A generous mind can take no pleasure in exposing the errors and inconsistencies of great men. But if great men will allow themselves to attack the great truths of the religion believed and established in their country, and this in the most scornful and dogmatical manner, which is but too eminently the case at present; it becomes quite necessary, out of regard to the truth, and to our brethren, to prevent such authority from having greater stress laid upon it than it deserves, and the ignorant and weak from swallowing eagerly all thus advanced. And as this cannot be done without a sober and zealous opposition to these errors, such an opposition may be expected and required from every friend and lover of religion.

The Author of these papers has neither time nor inclination to oppose Lord Bolingbroke's notions in the way of controversy,

at large. Yet he is not without expectations, that the mite, which he now throws into the publick service, may have some good effect. So many concessions in favour of so many parts of our religion, notwithstanding such strong prejudices against most of these, are very remarkable indeed; and making them shows the prevailing force of truth, which will sometimes operate upon the mind. And the picking them out from such voluminous works, the sorting them properly, and connecting them together, is placing them in the fullest and strongest light, and fixing the reader's attention upon them, much more than if they continued scattered in different treatises, and mixed with very different reflections. No infidel can now boast of this noble author's authority, without owning it to be inconsistent; and inconsistent authority ought to have no weight. Whoever writes on both sides of any question, deserves little or no regard from either.

Indeed, had this happened occasionally only, or in one or two instances, it might have been imputed to forgetfulness or oversight; and candor might have passed it by in so large a work. But such a series of truths, as is now laid before the reader, so contradictory to the spirit which runs all through these philosophical essays, cannot be thus accounted for. And if the friends of revelation have not as good a claim to this great writer as the enemies of it; at least his name ought never to be mentioned to its disadvantage. It is no very difficult matter from the foregoing extracts to answer the principal

principal of the assertions, and of the insinuations, with which these essays abound, against religion both natural and revealed, at least, against some of the most important articles of both. Together with the poison we then have the antidote; but with this difference, that the former occurs perpetually, the latter much more thinly; which however will justify the endeavour to set this in the clearest light.

Who then can be so proper to answer Lord Bolingbroke, as Lord Bolingbroke? If what I have brought together be justly attended to, remembered, and applied; we need be in no sort of pain about the ill impression, which any other parts of his writings may leave on any fair considerate reader. And if persons will only regard what he says against religion, they deceive themselves, and shew the partial and prejudiced disposition of their own minds; they are deluded by high colouring and bold expressions, and must not pretend to make a fair and cool judgment; nor to allow both sides of these most important questions the same just and equitable attention and consideration.

Tho' I decline the entering upon a minute and particular comparison of all his Lordship's thought proper to advance; yet I am not willing to stop at these general reflections. Let us take a short review of the several heads, under which I have ranged his concessions, observe the consequences which directly flow from them, the influence they ought to have on every fair enquirer, and the

opposition made against them in other parts of these writings.

THE first head relates to *the force of prejudices and passions*. The observations here are general. They are inserted with no other view than to prevent any wonder or surprize, which unheeding persons may entertain, when they see others of superior abilities depart from religious principles; and to obviate any prejudices against these on this account. The noble author has himself furnished us with a good solution of this difficulty; and gives a just reason, why men, even of capacity, who think in general rightly and judiciously in other matters, may err in those of the utmost consequence; and why the same evidence, which determines their assent and choice in others, may here be thought insufficient. The reason is just. Nor do I know that he has said any thing in other parts to take away the force of it. I wish we had not so many strong examples to confirm it.

THE second head, *the necessity of religion*, and of an *established religion, to government*, is equally clear. Here this politician's sentiments may expect their full weight. And the direct conclusion from hence is, that the enemies to religion and virtue are the worst enemies to civil government; and that whoever undertakes needlessly to unsettle the religious principles of men, to disturb and perplex their minds, and to abuse and insult the received faith and doctrines, contributes all he can to introduce disorder and confusion into society. I say, needlessly. For without all doubt, there may

may be cases, there have been such, in which it is necessary to assert clear and important truths, and to disprove established errors, when these affect the credit, or destroy the efficacy, of religion in general, or of Christianity in particular. But even here, if people really intend any good by their opposition, the most becoming and the surest way of succeeding would be, to propose their difficulties and objections as humbly and modestly as they can, and to attempt to support them only by reason and argument. That the many attacks we have known of late against the religion of this nation, have not been made in this temper and spirit, no one, who has looked into them, can deny or doubt. They are equally insolent and unnecessary. Believers have reason to be offended, to see things they justly esteem sacred treated with a levity most unsuitable to their nature. And every friend of our constitution must highly disapprove of such bold attempts to prejudice men against a religion, on which our laws are built, and the truth of which they continually suppose.

We see under the twelfth head, that what Lord Bolingbroke here says of religion in general, he allows to be true of Christianity, that it is best suited to promote the interests of society and government. How very impolitic then must it be to oppose it? or what public good can be expected to arise from this opposition? The gospel deserves every degree of countenance and protection from superiors, all manner of reverence and submission from private persons, as its views

are so eminently the union and happiness of both. And a proportionable increase of vice and mischief has followed, and must ever follow, every neglect and contempt of it. Here a passage in the twelfth letter of the dissertation on parties occurs to my memory. It will serve to illustrate the point we are upon. "Some men there are, the pests of society I think them, who pretend a great regard to religion in general, but who take every opportunity of declaiming publicly against that system of religion, or at least against that church establishment, which is received in *Britain* . . . I am persuaded, that [such men] . . . have not yet prepared and agreed upon the plan of a new religion . . . We should find ourselves then without any form of religion."

LET us now proceed to the third head, under which we shall find very high things said of *human nature*, and indeed as much as can well be said. Man is here declared to be an immaterial, spiritual, intelligent, reasonable, moral agent; compounded of body and mind; the principal inhabitant of the earth; prepared for happiness suitable to his nature; created with free-will to attain this, if he pleases; and made able to perform the duties of religion, the chief purpose of his destination . . . The direct consequence of all this is, that he is an accountable creature, and liable to be rewarded, and punished for his actions; and this, not only as a member of society, and according to the laws of the country he happens to live in, but as a private person,

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and an individual, according to the laws of God Almighty, which he is thus made capable of discovering and obeying . . . It also, I think, clearly follows from the foregoing representation, that this superior happiness, and highest destination, of man must have a view beyond this short, frail, precarious, unsatisfactory, if not miserable, life; that nothing here can adequately answer our talents and capacities; especially as this writer expressly says, that "in those inferior Vol. V. purposes, that regard animal life, other p. 98. creatures have by nature the advantage over men."

Astonishing it is, that so fine a genius should not see these plain consequences of what he had owned. And yet we must think they escaped him. For it is but too certain, that he frequently sets himself against them. Nay sometimes he contradicts his own principles.

Our being a compound of material and Vol. I. immaterial substance is denied. p. 20.

All spirits are declared hypothetical, except the infinite spirit. p. 102.

The distinction of body and soul argued p. 198. against.

That there are spiritual natures, distinct p. 242. from corporeal, we have no knowledge at all.

All the phænomena from our birth to our p. 269. death seem repugnant to the immateriality and immortality of the soul.

There may be created minds or intelli-Vol. II. gences much superior to ours, but not im- p. 146. material spiritual beings.

Vol. III. Man's participating of the divine nature,
p. 133. and being made after the image of God
ridiculed as proceeding from the pride of
man.

p. 135. It is madness and dreaming to suppose a
soul in man.

Vol. IV. Man the principal inhabitant of this planet.

p. 316. It will not follow, that it was made for his
sake, nor that infinite wisdom had no other
end of making him, than that of making an
happy creature.

p. 393. While self-love and social are the same
. . . every reasonable man will confess, that
such a state is as happy, not only as human
eye ever saw, or human ear ever heard, but
as the heart of man can conceive to belong
to humanity.

Vol. V. National virtue and national vice have

p. 100. always produced national happiness and na-
tional misery in a due proportion, and are
by consequence the great sanctions of the
law of nature. These sanctions are suf-
ficient, *in terrorem*, to the collective bodies
of men, and the punishment of individuals is
left to the discipline of those laws which every
society makes for its own sake.

p. 110. It is plain, by the whole course of God's
providence, that he regards his human
creatures collectively, not individually.

p. 111. Individuals are the objects of human justice;
societies of men of divine justice.

TO these extracts others may be added,
which will be produced, when we come to the
head of future rewards and punishments. I
beg now to make a few reflections on these
before us.

Every

Every one must see here a very different account of human nature from that which was before taken from this noble writer. Many important privileges, which were then granted, are here denied or explained away. These contradictions appear impossible to be reconciled. We cannot then embrace all these opinions. And it is surely for the honor of our nature, which I know not why we should study or desire to renounce, as well as an act of gratitude to our Creator, to chuse the former.

To mention only a few of the difficulties, which occur to me on comparing all these passages together. 1. *If the argument from our own intelligence to a First intelligence be plain and obvious, and if the sole criterion of immaterial spirit is our own spirit*; then how will it be possible to prove that God is a spirit, unless we grant at the same time, that there is something spiritual within us? If motion cannot be produced by mere matter, much less can life, and thought, and reasoning, willing, choosing, determining, loving, hating, &c. These cannot be the effects or properties of matter. Wherever they are found, they must proceed from some immaterial substance, and exist also in such. We may not be able perfectly to explain or comprehend what this is. But to deny its spirituality on this account would be absurd. We know there is, and must be, a difference no less than infinite between our own mind, nay between the most exalted created mind, and the Supreme Divine mind. But we cannot from hence gather, that there is no sort of affinity or likeness
between

between them, or that they are not only in degree, but in kind, altogether dissimilar. Or, if this be really the case, I do not see, how the existence of the one could be proved from the others. These properties and affections, of which we are conscious, and of which we see the effects, must subsist in some subject or other. Call this soul, or mind, or what you will, it must be different from, and superior to matter. They cannot spring from mere matter or motion, being still, *toto genere*, distinct and more excellent. If then you contend, that matter is capable of all this, the objection recurs, and is, I think unanswerable, that the case might have been originally the same in the Deity; and then how will you from these effects demonstrate an Immaterial cause? So that by denying yourself to be a spiritual being, you take away the very foundation of your argument, *the sole criterion of spirit in general* *.

2. If

* Should it be here replied, that tho' thought is not an original property of matter, yet it may be superadded to it by God; we may ask, why, if this be so, they may not have been originally joined together in God himself. The objection then remains. If thought, &c. may become properties of matter, I see no reason why this might not always have been the subject of them. How then shall we prove God to be more than matter? which Lord Bolingbroke allows him to be, as indeed every one must, who is fit to be argued with. The consequence then is, that we ourselves are, in part, immaterial beings, as all our notions of immateriality are allowed to proceed from what we know and feel within ourselves.

2. If we have clear and determinate ideas of body by sensation, and of spirit by reflection, and a conscious knowlege of the reciprocal action of body and mind; which is granted, and is undeniable; then we must be compounded of material and immaterial substance . . . then there is a distinction between soul and body . . . then we may, nay must, have some knowlege of spiritual natures distinct from corporeal, and may suppose a soul without madness and dreaming.

3. Neither can all the phænomena from our birth to our death be repugnant to its immateriality and immortality. Some dependence indeed it has on the body, as it must receive its first ideas and impressions from sense, and will frequently partake of the imperfections of this its companion. Yet how often do we see dulness and strength in the same persons? how often a fine genius and capacity, an excellent head and an excellent heart, exerting themselves, when joined with a weak and distempered constitution? How often do they survive the ruins of the body, if I may so speak, and display their peculiar powers in times of sickness, nay when near the approach of their dissolution from it?

4. It is, I think, impossible to conceive any difference between minds and intelligences, and immaterial spiritual beings; tho' the noble writer's scheme required him to distinguish between them, when he allowed, that there might be one, but not the other. If intellect is above the mere powers of motion and figure, it must be immaterial.

5. *If we are obliged to our Creator for a certain rule, and sufficient means of arriving at happiness* ; then, I apprehend, it will follow, that the end of God's making man was to make him an happy creature, at least a creature capable of happiness. And indeed, what other end can we suppose of our creation ?

Lastly, if *man is a religious, as well as a social creature*, and a free and moral agent ; it appears to be undeniable, that there is a law of nature, antecedent to, and distinct from, the law of societies ; that the sanctions of national happiness and misery are not the sole sanctions of the law of nature, if they are properly so at all ; that these are not sufficient to make particular men religious and virtuous ; and that individuals must be the objects of Divine Providence and Divine Justice. Whether there ever was any public state completely happy according to his Lordship's description, in one of these extracts, may be much questioned. Allow that there were. It must be granted, that some very good men may be very unhappy, and some very bad ones very prosperous, in it. The physical evils and inconveniencies, to which the former stand exposed, such as loss of health and friends, disappointments and poverty, will hinder them from taking any great share in the general happiness. And if the punishment of individuals is left to human laws, yet the rewarding them can very seldom, and in few instances, be provided for by these. And yet rewards are as much sanctions as punishments can be ; and the equitable distribution of the one is as much
a part

a part of justice as that of the others . . . On the other hand, neither can legal punishments be sufficient. In many cases the crimes cannot be so ascertained, as that the punishments will be certainly proportioned to the guilt. In many these will be evaded. The hopes of being undiscovered, which hopes will also sometimes succeed, will defeat the good effect of them. And bad men, if they find their account at present in their corruption and iniquity, will look with great indifference on the public misery they contribute to. So that some higher and more certain sanctions of religion, and the law of nature, such as must affect individuals in a nearer and closer manner, are still wanted to enforce it. We see the necessity of some happiness and misery more proportioned to the right use, or abuse, of the talents and faculties now granted us. And as the brutes have confessedly the advantage of us *with respect to animal life*; the benefits of social life, were these all, would not make us full amends, nor answer the superior dignity of our natures.

THE fourth head is a very comprehensive one. It contains the great articles of *the Being, Perfections, and Providence of God, and our duty to Him*. These are said to be demonstrable by our reason. So is His Nature. His unity, incomprehensibility, the connection between His natural and moral attributes, His power, and wisdom, and goodness, the particular chastisements He sometimes sends, the easiness of His operations, His all-perfection, self-existence, and intelligence, are largely granted. It is also
here

here declared, that His will constitutes the obligation of duty ; that we ought inwardly and sincerely to worship and obey Him ; that He is the Greatest Object of our gratitude, resignation, hope, and addresses ; that our highest honor is to know and adore Him, to discover His will, and to promote our happiness by obeying it ; and that the Unity of the First Cause was originally the Universal belief of mankind.

I am by no means desirous to insinuate, that this noble writer had any atheistical doubts about him of the existence of The One True God, the First Cause of all, of whom he speaks in such strong terms of reverence and veneration. And I am concerned to give any passages, which may seem to interfere with what is here said, but impartiality requires me to produce the following ones.

- Vol. I. The unity of God was not the primitive
p. 300. faith of mankind. Revelations to the father,
and to the restorer of the whole human race,
might have established this faith universally :
but without revelation it could not be that
even of any one people, till observation and
meditation, till a full and vigorous exercise of
reason, made it such.
- Vol. II. God's continual operation on matter de-
p. 58. nied.
- p. 367. The moral attributes of God, the general
system of his providence, as inscrutable
to man as to beasts.
- Vol. III. Absurd in the Jews to make God an actor
p. 114. immediately, and personally, as it were, in
the creation, and in the government of the
world.

The

The distinction between God's physical p. 411.
and moral attributes, I do not see one religious purpose that it is necessary to answer.

. tender and hearty concern for the happiness of man . . . strange words to be applied to the Supreme Being

God's moral attributes, holiness, goodness, justice, righteousness, and truth, are not discerned in his works, as to be proper objects of our imitation. p. 412.

God has not established particular providences for particular nations, much less for particular men, as far as we can discover by the help of reason and experience. Vol. IV. p. 171.

Men are fond of access to the Supreme Being. Nothing can flatter humanity so much. p. 175.

To know that an All-perfect Being existed by the necessity of his nature, and that his wisdom and power are infinite, is represented as knowing as much of God as natural religion requires. p. 204. Vol. V. p. 76.

The physical and moral systems have no need, like the bungling works, and imperfect institutions, of men, to be carried on by frequent interpositions and partial directions, that they may continue to answer the end of their Maker. p. 14.

The theist admits enough particular providences to break through and overturn the natural order and constitution of the physical and moral system. p. 28.

Particular providences would be so many miracles in the strict sense of the word. p. 83.

God does not govern the world by particular providences, and it seems to be contrary p. 99.

trary to what infinite wisdom has established, that He should.

p. 170. We must conceive God's justice and goodness bounded.

p. 302. Demonstration alone, not even universal tradition, the sole proof of the Being of God,

p. 318. The variety of the phenomena, which struck their senses, would lead the generality most probably, to imagine a variety of causes; and more observations, and deeper reflections, than the first men could make, were necessary to prove the Unity of the First Cause. That some made them, at least very early, can scarce be doubted.

My reflections on this head are these.

1. THAT *the one true God must have been from the beginning known by all . . . and, that the Unity of God was not the primitive faith of mankind . . .* are self-contradictory propositions, and cannot both be true; tho' they are here both twice asserted. If we abide by the former, this writer allows, it must have originally come from revelation. If we hold the latter, the need of revelation to teach this first principle of religion to all, is clear. I say, to all. For tho' it be capable of being discovered by *observation and meditation, and a full and vigorous exercise of reason*; yet this must have been a work of some time, which all are not equal to; and yet all from the beginning were concerned to know, believe, and worship the One True God.

2. If *reason is sufficient to demonstrate God's attributes and Providence*, how is it, that his *moral attributes, and the general system*

stem of his Providence is said to be *as inscrutable to man as to beasts*? If God is an All-perfect Being; surely holiness, goodness, justice, righteousness, and truth, are perfections, as much at least so as power and wisdom; which indeed without the others are not proper foundations for our *gratitude, resignation, hope, or addresses*. None of these attributes can be comprehended by us; but they are all discoverable. We may both argue up to them, and down again from them all. It is owned to be *the highest absurdity not to acknowledge the Divine Goodness in all his works*; and to be necessary to believe, that God will not proceed with any in violation of that justice, of which he had made us able to acquire notions. Is not this saying, that he acts justly, and is just and good; not in a bounded or limited manner, for this I cannot conceive; but as the All-perfect Fountain of these excellencies, *which he has constituted in the nature of things*? Can we ascribe justice or goodness to him at all, and yet be no more able to search out his moral attributes, than the beasts are? this seems to be confusion all over.

Again, if *reason* be sufficient to demonstrate God's Providence, then neither is the general system of this utterly *inscrutable* to us. We may certainly learn the truth of it, tho' we shall never be able to comprehend it.

3. With regard to particular providences, Lord Bolingbroke speaks very variously. He owns, that *the care of man has not been neglected by God*; I presume, he meant, the care of every particular man; that *chastisements*

ments should teach mankind to adore and fear that Providence, which governs the world by particular as well as general dispensations; that he does not deny particular Providences; and that this belief keeps up a belief of prayer; which may be a very useful, and consequently a very rational, expedient, to keep up a sense of our dependence on God... On the contrary, he charges the Jews with absurdity in making God an actor immediately, and personally, as it were, in the creation and government of the world (words, which I own I do not understand, and should be very unwilling to understand in their worst sense...) He asserts, that God has not established particular Providences for particular nations, much less for particular men... he insinuates, that to suppose frequent interpositions would be to think the physical and moral systems like the bungling works and imperfect institutions of men... that particular Providences overturn the natural order of things; would be strictly so many miracles, and seem contrary to what Infinite Wisdom has established.

In short, this great man does not seem to have thought clearly on this subject; and I cannot but suspect, that he had some other notion of particular providences in his head, than what the world has hitherto understood by this expression; viz. a care of, and regard to, not only the course of nature in general, but each man in particular; not indeed rewarding or punishing him immediately for his good and ill actions, tho' this may sometimes be done, but protecting, defending, assisting, and blessing him. This is the sole
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and sure ground of all dependence, worship, and duty to him, and of all comfort and steadiness within ourselves. And if any thing else be meant, the expression is unguarded and misapplied. But if this be meant, all that is said above, and in his Lordship's whole book against it, is mere declamation . . . There can be no difficulty in determining between these two accounts. The one is clear and cogent : The other is all over obscure and intricate.

We cannot indeed hope to explain the manner, how the Supreme Being acts ; or answer all the numberless questions which may be asked on this subject by vain and idle persons. Second causes undoubtedly are used. But these should not exclude, should not fail to lead our thoughts up to the first. The Infinite Perfection of God's ways and works above ours, and our incapacity to *measure* them, is observed by his Lordship.

4. There are a few errors more, couched in the extracts immediately foregoing, which it may be proper just to point out, and which may not be directly reducible to any of the particulars mentioned . . . This author thinks, *tender and hearty concern for the happiness of men, strange words to be applied to the Supreme Being.* It is strange to me, that any exception should be taken against them. They mean no more than very great pity, affection, and desire of our good. We do not intend by this to ascribe passions to God. We do not pretend to express or conceive how any of his attributes belong to him. But the effects of his love

love and goodness we daily see and feel. We have no way to declare our sense of this, but by terms very inadequate, and borrowed from our sentiments and dealings with each other. And if we knew any that were still stronger, they would be still more strictly applicable . . . *Men are said to be fond of access to the Supreme Being. Nothing flatters humanity so much.* I hope this is not a sneer, tho' I fear it looks like one. Prayer is certainly one of the highest privileges, as well as one of the greatest comforts, which belong to us ; and it were to be wished, that men were much more sensible of it, than they are. There would be more virtue, and more happiness, in the world, than we find at present. But indeed, the generality are too backward to this duty . . . *Natural religion, with regard to God, is much contracted and narrowed, when it is made to consist only in the knowledge of an All-perfect self-existent Creator of infinite power and wisdom—I cannot assent to the noble author, when he asserts, that demonstration alone, not even universal tradition, is the sole proof of the being of God.* I should be sorry to build on arguments which are not strictly conclusive. Nor indeed in the present case can there be any occasion to produce these, as this great truth is capable of such as are unanswerable. But neither can I see any reason to discard any proof of it, which will bear examination. As different ways of reasoning may be adapted to different persons ; so universal tradition may touch and affect some, whom demonstration could not. In a word, tradi-
tion,

tition, when it is as early and universal, as it is in the matter before us, must be satisfactory to every fair enquirer. There is no way of accounting for it, but by supposing it to be founded in reason and truth. "Omnium consensus naturæ vox." This will receive confirmation from what this author himself has told us, Vol. II. p. 227. "Opinions fluctuate perpetually: when one of them alone can be true, a thousand, that stand in direct opposition to one another, are entertained. While they last, they are unsteady; time and experience explode them often: and when they return into use again, they are seldom exactly the same. Principles of real knowledge are fixed and uniform: time and experience confirm them. They cannot be exploded; they may be unknown, or they may be forgot, but when perceived, are perceived by every mind alike." The immediate consequence from hence is, that universal concurrence in belief among all nations of the world, such as there is for the Being of God, which never was *unknown* and much less *exploded*, must have a just weight and influence on the mind, and be considered as a *principle of real knowledge*.

HEAD the fifth. This relates to that great article of all religion, *future rewards and punishments*. The possibility and the wisdom of this to enforce morality and piety is owned. *Secret thoughts* are said to be *thus affected*. *Eternal punishments* are allowed to be the *sanction of religion*. There may

may be, I presume hereafter, *a manner of knowing, which we cannot now conceive.* A future state was *established long before we have any light into antiquity; owing to a natural desire of existence; could not fail to encourage virtue, and restrain vice; rests on the authority of revelation; reason can have no objection against it. No doctrines were more inculcated. We wish to be immortal.* The contrary is very uncomfortable. *Capital punishments* are not inflicted to *reform offenders.* The greatest terrors of punishment owned to be sometimes necessary.

The purport of all these concessions is, that this doctrine is natural, useful, desirable, and therefore true. This is the conclusion, which I think may, and ought to be drawn. Revelation confirms here the desires of nature, and the dictates of reason. Let us now see, what the noble writer has in other places advanced, which may affect so early, so general, and so necessary an opinion.

Vol. I.
p. 307.

The ancient lawgivers not much in earnest about a doctrine, which they were extremely solicitous to inculcate, of future rewards and punishments.

p. 308.
Vol. IV.

This is a proper political expedient.

p. 206.

The belief of future rewards and punishments was owing to the pride of the human

p. 211.

heart. . . . A part of artificial theology.

p. 217.

To be taught to fear an angry God is mentioned as an error.

p. 311.

The dispensations of Providence, in the distributions of good and evil, stand in no need of any hypothesis to justify them; and

if

if they did, that of a future state of rewards and punishments would be insufficient.

A future state cannot be demonstrated by p. 343. reason ; it is not in the nature of it capable of demonstration, and no one ever returned that irremeable way, to give us an assurance of the fact. It was therefore originally an Vol. IV. hypothesis ; and it may then be a vulgar p. 214. error.

If they admitted a future state, they, *Tully* p. 351. in particular, laughed at the old women's tales of hell and the furies.

God supposed thus to correct his first p. 354. plan.

In vain will they endeavour to persuade, p. 378. that the conditions of humanity are imperfections in the system ; and that in the works of God, as in those of men, whatever falls short of the idea of the workman, or is not proportioned to the value of the materials he prepares in one essay, may be rectified in another instance.

The seeming imperfection (even moral) of p. 385. the parts, necessary to the real perfection of the whole.

That we should return to the earth from p. 397. whence we came, to the dirt under our feet, does not seem any indignity offered to our nature, since it is common to all the animal kind : and he, who complains of it as such, does not seem to have been set, by his reasoning faculties, so far above them in life, as to deserve not to be levelled with them at death.

If Christians do not assume, that health Vol. V. and the advantages of fortune constitute p. 13.

happinefs solely, they affume that it is conftituted principally by thefe; fince on the want, which good men have fometimes of thefe, they accufe God of injuftice. They pretend to keep an account between God and man, &c.

p. 139. Eternal torments inconfiftent with any notions of juftice.

p. 151. Future rewards and punifhments cannot be fanktions of the law of nature, becaufe not known to the old world, nor to Mofes.

p. 153. When and wherever known, it was plainly of human, not of Divine, authority.

p. 157. . . . Punifhed to no end at all, when this fystem was at an end, with inconceivable and eternal torments.

p. 355. Mofes did not believe the immortality of the foul, nor the rewards and punifhments of another life . . . he taught neither.

THUS this great man thought proper to talk againft an article, which he cannot but own to be agreeable to nature, ferviceable to virtue, and ufeful to fociety; and the firm belief of which has been to good men their great fupport and comfort in this fcene of uncertainty, temptation, and trial. He can here calmly mention the being *levelled with the brutes at death*, as *no indignity to our nature*; tho' in other places he pleads for our being far raifed above them, and born to higher things than they. 'Tis hard to imagine, that any one can write or read this, without fome generous indignation. Nor can we believe it, without offering violence to ourfelves; and forgetting, if not fuppreffing, our inextinguifhable defires of exiftence; our ardent and noble

noble aspirings after truth and happiness, which cannot be answered here; and our being endued with reason, and liberty, and natural conscience; all which evidently look forwards towards another state of rewards and punishments, much more universal and exact, than any appear in this life. All which shews this doctrine to be more than a *political expedient*, or human invention, and that it is, if I may so say, rooted in the heart itself; and if it was *owing to pride*, this pride is natural and laudable, which ought never to be checked, but always to be encouraged, as leading to all manner of wise and good actions.

2. It is surprising to find Lord Bolingbroke asserting, that *the ancient law-givers were not much in earnest about a doctrine, which he owns they were extremely solicitous to inculcate*. Could they shew their sincerity more strongly than by this solicitude? How then can this point be made out.

3. If we can judge at all from the relations and fitnesses of things, we must conclude that sinners are liable to punishment; and in some cases, justice may even require them to be punished. In all such, a displeasure or anger against sin must be supposed, which at the same time needs not to be confounded with rage, or fury, or desire of vengeance against the offender. Sometimes this anger may be necessary to *reform himself*: sometimes to *discourage others*: sometimes to *cut off hurtful members of society*. These ends of punishment the noble author allows. And how then could he mention it, as *an error, to fear an angry God?*

When the Divine Being sees any wickedness, he must see it with displeasure. We attribute this to him, as we ascribe love, or joy, or any other of the affections; removing all degree of weakness and imperfection, and making use of the best ideas and ways of speaking, which we have or can have, not pretending they are strictly equal and just. I know this writer declares against Vol. V. p. 168. *knowing the divine attributes by analogy, as not knowing them at all.* But something of this kind must here take place, or we must leave off to speak or think of God at all; since we can no more reflect upon him, than see him, *as he is*; and since all our ideas must be borrowed from what we see, or are conscious of. If then our fear is given us to any purpose, it must rise in proportion to the danger we are in; and this in proportion to the power we offend and provoke. To dread then the anger of an Almighty Governor of the world, and to endeavour to reconcile him to ourselves, is in the highest degree necessary. It is natural, rational, and really a virtue in us. And tho' it may sometimes have led the way to superstition; yet the want of it argues what is worse, either absolute unbelief, or inexcusable rashness and stupidity. This must suppose, either that God takes no notice at all of our wilful violations of his holy laws, or regards them with indifference, or that we may be reasonably unconcerned at his threatened and impending punishments. All which is absurd, and quite inconsistent with what his Lordship has allowed above.

4. With regard to external punishments, the case is somewhat different. This point must rest on the authority of the gospel. Our author owns, that they *are the sanction of religion*. And if so, I would hope, they are not *inconsistent with any notions of justice*. At least we have here no argument to prove them so; and the dispute rests where it did. He was precluded himself from one argument taken from reformation being the sole end of punishment, by assigning two other reasons of such as are extreme; either or both of which may, for ought we know, prevail in the dispensation here objected against. The eternal punishment of wicked men, far from being *to no end at all*, may be a standing perpetual terror to other creatures. And the society of the good and faithful may be thus preserved unmixed and unmolested.

5. The mixture of the good and evil, which is seen and felt in the world, has been always lamented; and from hence an argument has been drawn for another state of things, where present disorders will be rectified and settled. This the noble author very largely declaims against. He denies both the principle and the conclusion. He considers the representation as charging God impiously with want of justice and goodness: And he contends, that a future state of rewards and punishments would be insufficient to solve the difficulty, and justify the supposed wrong distributions of good and evil . . . As I am not writing a professed answer to these works, I shall not pretend to consider the several parts of this reasoning fully and particularly.

ticularly. A very few strictures will be sufficient to my purpose,

That there are inequalities in the Divine dispensations here, is as clear as possible. Experience of all ages has shewn this in the strongest light. When virtue is persecuted, and vice triumphant, can we think this state of things quite equal, or designed by a Just and Good God for the only or final one? Allow this world to be a place of trial and probation, in order to another, here will be a sufficient foundation and call for resignation and duty, and a sufficient vindication of all the divine attributes. But on any other supposition, good men will have frequently little encouragement to continue in their integrity, and wicked men an insufficient check to their wickedness. The former may be conceived to suffer undeservedly, and in the most essential respects, from the latter; and they may also suffer in their health and fortunes from other accidents, much more than the latter do. Were this our only state, it cannot be supposed, that God would have ordered things thus.

By arguing in this manner, we do not *assume*, as we are said to do, *that health and fortune constitute happiness principally*, nor do we *accuse God of injustice*. We only plead, that good men must be designed by a Good God to be the happiest; that under a total want of health and fortune they cannot be so; that sickness, pain, and misery, will make them otherwise, and, if they have no future happiness in view, will damp every prospect and expectation which can rise in their minds, and make them envy the happier

pier lot of the wicked, when these labour under no such disadvantages. Allow, that these too are upon the whole far from being happy. Yet so far as health and fortune are necessary to happiness, they are on the supposition the happier of the two. And as to the inward posture and frame of their minds, if we exclude the hopes and fears of future rewards and punishments, they will be both in this respect, I will not say exactly on a level, but, far more equal in their enjoyments than they are, if we admit those hopes and fears. And as this frame of their minds will be most commonly a secret, known to themselves only, it cannot be supposed to restrain others from any bad actions, or to incite them to good ones. Whereas ease, and plenty, and splendor will attract the eyes of men, and prove much stronger motives. And thus the moral government of God would appear defective; and his regard to the interests and credit of religion and virtue, as well to the good of those who follow them, would want to be cleared up and justified.

A future state therefore must follow from the present dispensation of things. Nor is this to accuse Heaven of injustice, but in reality to answer this charge of Atheism, and to account for the seeming inequalities of Providence: as undoubtedly it will. For if there be a future state, wherein full and final justice will be done to every one, then religion would be sufficiently supported, and impiety discouraged; good men amply rewarded for their faith and patience, and the incorrigible left to suffer the deserved consequences

sequences of their folly and obstinacy. Then the whole plan of Providence will appear to be One, Great, and Glorious . . . A short state of trial preparatory to an endless state of rewards and punishments; the calling men to judgment pursuant to the grants of reason, liberty, and choice; and dealing with them, as this author once owns we may Vol. V. *piouſly believe*, “ even with some regard to
p. 121. the use, they have made of their freewill here.”

So that those accusations of our *supposing* God to correct his first plan, or rectify his own works afterwards, are grounded on mistake, and can here have no place at all. Indeed I cannot see, how the conditions of humanity can be other than imperfections in the system, if under these conditions we include all our vices, with all the evils following them; though the one are barely permitted by God, and the others in the course and order of things appointed to succeed. These surely are imperfections in the system, as it is at present, though not as it was originally formed. . . . And still less can I agree, that any *moral imperfection of the parts* is necessary to the real perfection of the whole. Our sins are all strictly chargeable on ourselves, and not on our Maker. We have abused our talents, debased our nature, and thereby introduced much disorder and confusion into the world. But how can this be said to conduce to the perfection of the whole? If it be meant, that this perfection required, that there should be creatures of every rank and condition; surely we cannot think it necessary
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to this end, that some creatures should be actually immoral or sinful; because this would be impiously to charge our vices on the Holy Author of our Being, and to make these necessary parts of our constitution.

Before I dismiss this head, I would just take notice of what this author affirms, that *Moses did not believe the immortality of the soul, nor future rewards and punishments, because he taught neither.* It may here be justly said, that neither the premise, nor the conclusion is true. That our Lord collected this doctrine in part from the books of Moses, cannot be doubted. Nor has his inference ever, that I know, been denied. That the noble author allows of Christ's authority, will appear hereafter. We must therefore imagine, that this passage of the genuine gospels escaped his memory, when he wrote this . . . It is true, that the doctrine is not expressly mentioned, as the sanction of the Mosaical law. The reason of this I shall not pretend to be positive in. What first occurs is, that the law being given to a society of men, might properly be content with temporal sanctions; and that private persons might have been left either to the conclusions of their own reason, or, in those early times, to tradition, for a firm persuasion of the others . . . However, it will not follow from the bare silence of Moses, that he was ignorant of these. This is owned to have been an Egyptian doctrine before his time. Most probably therefore he was acquainted with it. But suppose him ignorant, neither can

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we collect from hence, that this *cannot be the sanction of the law of nature*. Nor will this necessarily follow, though we should grant the doctrine to be *not known to the old world*. But this we need not. Indeed of the faith [and opinions of the patriarchs, we have very short accounts. From none of these however can it be collected, that they were unacquainted with the doctrine. Rather from some of them we have very strong proof of the contrary. And what the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, says of Abraham, &c. is very probable, and indeed convincing, that they acted with a view to another life That *no one has returned* from the grave, is an objection which I am surprized to find coming from this writer. The gospels, which he allows, shew the contrary. Not but, should we grant the fact, what would follow? Is this sort of proof necessary, after so many sufficient proofs have been vouchsafed? No true Theist, I think, can say so.

THE review of the sixth head will detain us very little. It allows, the most early distinction between *good and evil demons*, and the existence of *some intellectual creatures vastly superior to ourselves*. The Scripture notion therefore of angels and devils, one would imagine, would meet with his Lordship's concurrence. The principles here laid down make the accounts of these beings, which revelation gives us, easy to be received. That evil demons should desire and endeavour to do mischief, should have power, and be sometimes permitted to do it, or not always restrained

restrained from it, is but suitable to their nature, and not hard to be believed: much less is it, that good demons should be happily employed in acts of worship and obedience to their Creator, and in ministering to us.

And yet it is certain, that his Lordship often very inconsistently talks against the Scripture accounts of both these.

He speaks against the *diabolical possessions*; Vol. I. though they are recorded in the gospels, and p. 150. on the suppositions allowed, there is no difficulty in accounting for them.

. Absurd to suppose, that a God Vol. II. soverainly good, and at the same time p. 30. Almighty and All-wise, suffers an inferior dependent being to deface his work in any sort, and to make his other creatures both criminal and miserable . . . to abuse the rest p. 31. without controul, and to draw them into crimes and revolts, for which he punishes them afterwards, is the most injurious accusation that can be brought.

Revelation supposed capable of realizing p. 149. and sanctifying wild imaginations about angels, &c.

The goodness, and even the wisdom of Vol. IV. God lye just as much exposed for suffering p. 310. an inferior being, his creature, and a creature in actual rebellion, to baffle the designs it is assumed that he had, as they would lye, if these designs were acknowledged to have been imperfectly executed by him.

Superior natures must be affected in some p. 334. degree or other by moral evil, since moral evil is the consequence of error, as well as of disorderly appetites and passions, and since
error

error is the consequence of imperfect understanding. Less of this evil may prevail among them.

Vol. V. Superior intelligent beings may be placed
p. 89. in other planets.

p. 90. Yet the notion of angels in heaven, demons, or genii, is assumed.

p. 114. The noblest creatures must be liable to some inconveniencies at least, both physical and moral.

NOW first, Can it be more *absurd* and *injurious*, more *contrary to the goodness and wisdom of God*, to suffer the devil to tempt and deceive men to their ruin, than to suffer wicked men to do the same by each other? And can this be denied? Or, is the Supreme Being subject to any imputations on this account? No more surely he ought to be on the other. He has given us reason and liberty to know and obey his law. Sufficient motives and sanctions are set before us, to lead us to obedience, and to deter us from sin. If there were no temptations, there could be no trial of our sincerity, and little or no virtue. If we will use our talents rightly, we need not fear the subtlety or power of our enemies. They were never let loose against us *without some controul*. Neither are we without divine aid and assistance. If we yield to their devices, it must be our own fault, and we are justly liable to be punished afterwards for it. Should this be called *defacing God's work*, which it may indeed in some measure; yet it ought not to be called *baffling his designs*; since his design was to make probationary creatures happy, on the supposition and condition of
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their obedience; and this design is wise and good, and cannot be baffled by all the powers of hell. . . . It is mentioned, that the devil is a *creature in actual rebellion*, and therefore less likely to be *suffered* to betray us. But if he were not so, what inclination or will could he have to do it? No fear of our suffering from any of the faithful servants of God.

2. I cannot conceive, why the notion of angels in heaven should be more liable to exception, than *superior intelligent beings in other planets*. Good demons, I apprehend, are no other than good angels. And if the word *Genii* conveys any superstitious meaning, it may be set aside, being not a scripture word. The only question is, whether it be not probable, that the superior heaven, where God dwells in all the brightness of glory and majesty, has its intelligent inhabitants, as well as this earth, or any other planet? With regard to the other planets, whatever we may conceive to be possible, we have not equal probability of their being inhabited, as with regard to the heaven. And whoever pretends to believe the gospels, must admit this last point as fully made known therein.

3. That the very highest angels (for why should there not be a gradation among them?) are the creatures of God Almighty, is certain: they must therefore fall infinitely short of Infinite Perfection. But we have no room to suppose them subject to *physical or moral evil*. *Disorderly appetites and passions* they have none. They may be, and we are taught that they are, secure from
error

error and sin, though their *understanding* is *imperfect*, and the whole circle of things knowable be out of their reach. What they are busied about, they may know truly.

THE want, and expediency, and authority, of a revelation, are the points which constitute the seventh head. Here, *inspiration* is allowed to be *not inconceivable*. Several most important doctrines are said to *rest on the authority of revelation*. A revelation *authentic, consistent* with itself and with natural religion, to be *received, and believed implicitly*. Its *authority enforces morality*. The *best philosophers unintelligible and inconsistent*. The *law of nature not universally known*. We may err in our enquiries. *Expiatory sacrifices ancient and universal*. *Plato declared the want of a Divine revelation*. The *heathen philosophers could not reform mankind*. *Reason delivers men to revelation*. *A future state, and the immortality of the soul, to be believed implicitly, because revealed*. *Some Theists rather hoped than believed this*. *No perfect Virtue here*.

SUCH are the contents of these extracts: And surely they deserve well to be attended to. The consequence must be an humble opinion of ourselves, and a thankfulness to our Creator for granting a revelation, which appears so very needful, not only to teach our duty, but to confirm and enforce it; and farther, to dispel those doubts and fears, which our imperfections and sins would make us liable to.

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According to the method proposed, we are now to bring together some passages of a very different, nay contrary tendency.

Christian inspiration is much misrepresented, and largely abused. See p. 155. Vol. I. p. 140.

Can he be less than mad, who boasts a revelation superadded to reason, to supply the defects of it, and who superadds reason to revelation to supply the defects of this too at the same time? Vol. II. p. 140. p. 160.

Mr. Locke affirms very untruly, that clear knowledge of duty was wanting to mankind before the coming of Christ. p. 256.

Reason is able to propagate the knowledge of natural religion . . . But men have imagined, that they have found in the frailty of human nature, an apparent necessity of going farther, &c. . . . The religion of nature tells us nothing, which our reason is unable to comprehend. p. 257.

Jarring between civil and religious government cannot be prevented, unless the entire power of both remain in the same hands, which may be done in natural religion, but not when revealed ones are established. Vol. III. p. 46.

A religion given by God is in its own nature invariable. Vol. III. p. 56.

All men able alike to discover the law of nature . . . All men do not discover it indeed alike, though all men, even the most savage and ignorant, have, as I believe, some imperfect notions of it. p. 384.

The primeval law of nature is that code, wherein all the laws, to which God has subjected. p. 406.

jected his human creatures, are contained
 . . . this immutable.

Vol. IV. Natural religion a perpetual standing re-
 p. 24. velation.

p. 26. The law of nature is plain and proportion-
 ed to the meanest understanding.

p. 165. There is no one moral virtue, which has
 not been taught, explained, and proved, by
 the heathen philosophers, both occasionally
 and purposely

p. 178. Plato's insinuations of the necessity of a
 Divine Revelation no proof that necessary
 knowlege was wanting.

p. 181. In natural theology, and in morality, the
 knowlege of the philosophers was not de-
 ficient.

p. 182. No doubt the philosophers discovered the
 whole truth and the whole secret of divine
 religion.

p. 275. To affirm, that natural and revealed re-
 ligion are alike unknown in any parts of the
 world, is to affirm an untruth.

Vol. V. From the immutability of natural religion,
 p. 190. it follows probably, that God has made no
 other revelation of himself and of his will to
 mankind.

LET me now be indulged in offering such
 reflections as arise, on comparing these pas-
 sages together.

I. I can see nothing, which in the least
 approaches towards deserving so harsh a
 censure as that of *madness*, in supposing
reason and revelation, which are owned to
 be *the two noblest gifts of God to man*, joined
 and added to each other, to supply the
 defects, to which they might both be other-
 wise subject. When considered in their
 con-

connection, they constitute the most certain criterion of truth, and the fullest rule of duty. To divide or part them, is to expose ourselves either to doubt and uncertainty, or to superstition and enthusiasm. In short, they explain, ascertain, and fulfil each other. Revelation may add not only its *authority* to enforce the laws of reason, but some doctrines and duties, which this could not discover. And reason, in her turn, may not only see the fitness of these doctrines and duties, but judge aright concerning the truth and meaning of the revelation, and apply in particular cases and instances such rules as are here left in general. Besides, we may suppose a revelation given to add some particular injunction only; which yet must leave whatever reason before taught in full force; this therefore not being superseded, may in the strictest sense be said to supply the defects of the other . . . And thus may these lend their mutual light and assistance, and enable each other effectually to answer their respective purposes: which, if they could not do, they would be so far defective.

2. If Lord Bolingbroke's account of the ancient philosophers be true, as it is, that the *best* of them were *often unintelligible, inconsistent, and contradictory* . . . if the *law of nature is not universally known* . . . if *reason is not given to all alike* . . . if in *natural theology the knowledge of the philosophers was confined to a very few general propositions* . . . if a *future state and the immortality of the soul were discovered by revelation* . . . then it should seem, that
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clear knowledge of duty must have been wanting to mankind before the coming of Christ ; as before this, the common people could neither attain to it by any enquiries of their own, nor could their philosophers sufficiently instruct them . . . then, all are not able alike to discover the law of nature. In short, all that follows about the clearness and sufficiency of this law, and of the extensive knowledge of the philosophers, cannot be true ; and indeed it is contrary to fact, as well as to the representation before made.

3. Supposing reason capable of discovering natural religion in all it's branches, it is still incapable of propagating it. *The weak and ignorant, according to the noble author's account, have only some imperfect notions of it : and the heathen philosophers he allows had not sufficient means of reforming mankind. A true revelation is also owned to be the most proper to enforce morality and natural religion ; it was given to do this by a superior authority, which cannot be pretended to by any man to whom it has not been given. So that we have here another very considerable concession, in favour of the usefulness and need of revelation.*

4. *Men have imagined, that they have found in the frailty of human nature an apparent necessity of going further, &c. I suppose his Lordship means, of accepting a revelation, that makes those provisions against this frailty, which natural religion does not. If this be all, surely they are no way to be blamed. - It would be both ingrateful and injurious to act otherwise. For*
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can it be denied, that our nature is weak and frail ? However this came originally, is the fact disputable ? And when any help of any sort is wanted, should we not be pleased to find it reached out to us, and thankfully receive it ? If *no perfect virtue is to be found among the sons of men*, if we are all offenders against the law of nature ; do we not evidently need assistance to strengthen us, as well as some sure method of atonement and reconciliation, more than this law contains or teaches ? By this all sinners are condemned. Is there not then *an apparent necessity of going farther*, if we have any farther offers or promises, light or encouragement ? Are not these most expedient and desirable to persons in our situation ? And do not the *expiatory sacrifices* of the heathen world, acknowledged to be *most ancient and universal*, and relied upon for this very end, shew this to have been the general sense of mankind ? Suppose these to have been at first invented by men, though in all probability they were of Divine institution ; still they would never have been thought of, at least they could not have acquired such universal veneration, if the consciousness of human frailty and guilt had not led men to look beyond themselves for help and comfort.

5. The next error, which requires a remark, is, that *the religion of nature tells us nothing, which our reason is unable to comprehend*. I stand amazed. And is not God then part of what this religion tells us ? And is not he incomprehensible in his nature, his attributes, his providence, his works,
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and all his ways? *How should finite measure infinite*, is his Lordship's own question, and is irreconcilable with what is here advanced. So that a true theist must admit mysteries in general, which his own system contains.

6. It is no consequence of the *establishment of revealed religion*, that *civil and religious government should necessarily jar*. If either of these arbitrarily assume powers, which do not belong to them, whether the religion be natural or revealed, this contention may be expected to follow such encroachment. But while both will keep within their proper spheres, both will be helpful and serviceable to each other, and promote the good and happiness of the whole. Revealed religion contributes to this, more than natural; and more when it is established, than when it is not. This is our present case at present, for which we cannot be too thankful.

7. I shall not resume the debate about the *immutability of the Divine law*, or of the law of nature; which is so accurately stated, and so judiciously settled, by the present Bishop of Bristol. But how it is so much as *probable from hence, that God has made no other revelation of himself and of his will to mankind*, I cannot perceive. Admit that the truths and laws of reason are quite invariable, and that their obligation never ceases or changes; yet may not another manifestation of the Divine will be granted to explain and teach them to the ignorant, and to persons of mean capacities; who, though unable to discover them, may be greatly

greatly interested in them? May not a revelation strengthen and enforce the observance of them by powerful sanctions, and *by a superior authority?* His Lordship has owned, that *it was actually given* for this purpose, and that *nothing can seem so proper*. Here therefore he plainly opposes himself. Nay, unless the nature and circumstances of men were always to continue the same, which certainly they do not, the religion of nature, however invariable, may become insufficient alone; and new relations, fitnesses, and duties may very wisely and properly be discovered, and superadded to it by the authority of God, which will then be equally binding upon the conscience, and necessary to secure our comfort and welfare. This also the noble author admits to be possible, as appears under the thirteenth head. How then could he draw the conclusion we are here arguing against? . . . Nay, if there be probably no other revelation but what he calls the standing one of nature, how could he speak of *natural reason, and supernatural revelation, as the two noblest gifts of God to man?* This and many other passages above extracted, must suppose this last to be so far from an improbable thing, as to have actually been vouchsafed. Or, else we must say, there is neither truth nor meaning in them.

8. We have seen, how Lord Bolingbroke acknowledges, that *Plato insinuates in many places, the want or the necessity of a Divine revelation to discover many truths of the last importance, which are there mentioned.* This the friends of revelation have

have justly laid great stress upon. For if so great a man felt and owned the weakness of human reason, or his own, which was scarce inferior to any, in these particulars; surely it must be great folly and vanity to boast of its sufficiency and perfection. It may not be always easy, now it is assisted by revelation, to say how far it could go alone. But when it had no such assistance and is thus heard to complain for the want of it, we may be assured of its defects. This philosopher, I know, frequently undergoes the severe lash of our noble writer. And yet Vol. II. p. 379, it is confessed, that “ not only the notions of “ *Plato* and *Socrates* concerning divine “ worship, but concerning the existence of “ the Supreme Being, were much more “ conformable to right reason, than any “ of those which prevailed at that time.” And again, Vol. III. p. 110. “ Theism “ is said to have been taught more purely, “ and religion made more intellectual, by “ philosophers, who refined on the gross “ theology, like *Pythagoras* and *Plato*.” Surely then so great a man deserves to be heard, and his testimony must have much weight on this occasion. Lord Bolingbroke is however willing to allow it very little or none. He says, that this *was no proof, that necessary knowlege was wanting*. So that the *worship of God, expiation for sin, assurances of the future rewards and punishments which await us, and a system of God’s government in heaven and earth*, must not be considered as necessary knowlege. But seriously, what articles can be of greater con-

consequence, or more closely connected with true religion and virtue, the peace of men's minds, or the interests and welfare of societies? Is it possible, that these should ever be considered as points of mere curiosity or amusement, which human pride will daringly and presumptuously employ itself in the search of? No, in proportion as they are withheld from us, or unknown, the mind must be in a state of doubt and fear, of darkness and great uneasiness. How highly expedient then is revelation to remove all these, and to bring to light what was so much wanted to give encouragement and comfort? Wanted they undoubtedly were; unless we say, that *Plato* was in these things inferior to the other philosophers: And this would be to contradict the character which our late noble philosopher has given of them.

THE proper proofs of a Divine revelation from the eighth head. Here *real miracles* are owned to come from God; and therefore they must be looked upon, as the seals by which He ratifies and confirms the pretensions of any who would be thought to bring a message from Him, and by which the authority and truth of any revealed articles or doctrines must be tried and manifested. And *moral evidence*, and *human testimony*, are very justly represented as *the proper proof of such past facts, as do not imply a contradiction*; and therefore, we may say, of past miracles; though we may have seen nothing of the same kind ourselves; we *discover nothing in our experience contradictory* to them, and consequently
nothing

nothing to defeat the testimony on which they stand.

Let us now see what his Lordship has advanced on the other side.

Vol. II. The force of traditionary revelation diminishes gradually, and ceases at last altogether.

p. 264. Miracles occasionally wrought before some, and reported by others, are inadequate to universal conviction.

Vol. V. Any change in the general laws of nature would be a change of the system. These laws are invariable.

THE reader, if he is at all attentive, cannot fail to observe the inconsistency of these assertions, with the former ones. If there are *real miracles*, there must be some temporary *change* or suspension of the *general laws* and *course of nature*. And if they are *operated by the power of God*, and it is declared they can proceed from no other power, this makes such change or suspension credible; as there can be no difficulty in supposing the Author of Nature, who at first fixed all its laws, and in general supports and maintains them, able, whenever he pleases, and inclined, whenever some wise and great ends can be promoted thereby, to change or suspend them, or to act contrary to them . . . Again.

2. As these facts *imply no contradiction* in themselves, or to any thing we see; the certainty of them is capable of being proved to us, though we never saw any instance of the same ourselves. Here we cannot have the certainty of demonstration, but

but must be content to receive them for true, on *high probability*, or moral certainty i. e. *on the faith of human testimony, which is the only proper proof* in the case. If this be not defective, it may justly be thought convincing to all, who come to the knowledge of it: which quite overturns his Lordship's remark, that *miracles occasionally wrought before some, and reported by others, are inadequate to universal conviction*. Few comparatively cannot be supposed eye-witnesses of miracles. If believed then, they must be believed by the far greater part on report. This report may be sufficiently just and full: and when it is so, the *conviction* ought to be as *universal* as the spreading of it is.

Once more.

3. As such report and account of these facts may be originally true, and may be known to be true; so the memory of it may be preserved in writing, and thus handed down to the most distant ages. And when it is so, and has long stood the test of time and enquiry, it will still give strong and full satisfaction, and retain its first power of convincing. We have no more doubt of many things, which happened a thousand years ago, than of others, which were transacted no longer since than fifty. Nor is there any reason that we should . . .

And this is a sufficient answer to what the noble author says of *traditionary revelation*, that its *force diminishes gradually, and ceases at last altogether*. When mathematicians consider things according to the nicest exactness, this may, for all that I know, in theory appear to be true. But when we

D

come

come to practice, it is not so : or at least, the niceness is not worth attending to. If the tradition be sound and well continued, the weight supposed to be imperceptibly withdrawing from it, is too trifling to be regarded ; and the tradition will ever be found to answer its first purposes ; as the sun does in the firmament ; though the particles, of which its light and heat is composed, are imagined to be continually wasting and lessened We are not told, *when* the force of traditionary revelation ceases altogether, though it seems to be a matter of the first consequence to fix this period with exactness. In all probability, if it be possible to be fixed, our thoughts would be carried down to such an immense distance of time, that we should see at once the absurdity of the plea ; and own, that the traditions, on which we build any thing, have lost nothing of their credibility, nor are liable to be destroyed, as long as we shall want them. In short, they rather are confirmed, and acquire some new force ; as rivers grow larger, the farther they run And here, we must not omit, that this is certainly the case of Christianity ; the evidence of which increases by the accomplishment of new prophecies from time to time.

THE ninth head relates to the *Canon of Sacred Scripture*. Here it is not only asserted in general, that *the Bible is* a book of authority and *to be believed* ; but that *St. Matthew's and St. John's Gospels are true* ; admitted by Lord Bolingbroke as such on the *testimony of the fathers and the council at Laodicea* ;

Laodicea; that the Epistles were writ before St. John died; that the Apocalypse was received as the work of this Apostle some centuries before the year 360; and that the same spirit appears throughout the Old Testament: The consequence of which must be, that there is no internal mark of inconsistency or contradiction between the several books of it; and that if there be no flaw in their external testimony, their pretensions may claim credit.

We must now turn to a very different account of things.

The authenticity of your Sacred Scripture, Vol. I. in the whole, and in every part of them . . . p. 182. has not been yet proved.

The history of the Jews falsified by both Vol. II. Jews and Christians. p. 158.

The Chinese books of as good authority p. 185. and authenticity at least as those of the Jews.

A different proof of the authenticity and p. 270. meaning of sacred historians necessary, than of others.

The authenticity of the Sacred Scripture p. 274. has suffered much diminution by length of time, and by other ways.

The Apocalypse probably wrote by Ce-p. 337. rinthus, or some other enthusiast . . . Vol. III. Perhaps the reveries of a mad judaizing p. 100. Christian.

It is impossible to say when, or by whom, Vol. II. the other books of the Old Testament, be- p. 361. sides the Pentateuch, were written, with the least assurance All their sacred writings were compiled after their captivity, and the canon of them was long in settling.

Vol. III. Who St. Mark and St. Luke were, it is
p. 16. impossible to say with sufficient assurance,
amidst the fabulous or little authentic reports
of Ecclesiastical writers.

p. 163. No council in the fourth century deserved
more regard than that of *Trent*.

p. 250. We know neither why the Gospels, the
Epistles, and the Apocalypse we have, were
retained, or rather inserted in the canon; nor
why those we have not, were rejected. We
are forced to be in this case absolutely im-
plicit: and yet in this case, if in any, we
ought to have proof, that councils proceeded
with integrity.

Vol. V. The Sacred Scripture of the Jews were
p. 249. lost, more than once; and how they were
recovered, the last time at least, is unknown
to us: nay whether they were recovered
at all, in a strict sense, may be, and has
been, questioned by some Christians and
Jews too.

Vol. V. That the traditions contained in the books
p. 253. of the Pentateuch were compiled after *Moses's*
time, is not at all improbable.

p. 367. Gross defects, and palpable falsehoods,
in almost every page of the Sacred Scrip-
ture.

THUS it is, that this great man asserts
the authority of the Bible, and endeavours to
place it out of reach of evil. One can
hardly conceive, what should induce a person,
who does not appear to have studied dis-
guises, and was neither afraid, nor ashamed,
to write his sentiments, to lay himself open
to the charge of such gross inconsistency.
For these extracts are diametrically opposite
to those, which we before made and laid be-
fore

fore the reader. And they are likewise opposite to all truth and probability.

1. We must observe, that when his Lordship says, *the Bible is to be believed*, the circumstances of the passage shew that he meant, *though it is improbable or inconsistent*; and in the page following, he says, *the reason or internal proofs of it are not to be considered*. To think that he is in earnest here, seems impossible. And yet this is not the only passage of this kind to be met with in these volumes. Vol. II. p. 225. *The art of navigation is said to have decayed and rose again*, an opinion owned to be taken from *obscure tradition* . . . Vol. V. p. 126. *The hypothesis just mentioned I am willing to admit may be true, though it has no foundation in Sacred Scripture or reason, and is purely imaginary* . . . Vol. V. p. 121. *Some things may be admitted piously, on the faith of a revelation, concerning which we can scarce attempt to reason without impiety* . . . How this writer reconciled these things to himself, or how he could pretend to be led by evidence, when he talked in this manner, is more than I can say. His faith, could we imagine him to be serious, far outwent that of rational Christians.

2. By the Bible I suppose Lord Bolingbroke understood the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. If he allowed these to have any authority, he must allow their authenticity to have been proved . . . then *the history of the Jews*, as it is contained in these books, has not been *falsified* either by *Jews or Christians* . . . then the Sacred Scriptures

tures are, I hope, free from *gross defects and palpable falsehoods*.

3. It is somewhat unaccountable, that *the Chinese books* should be said to be of *as good authority and authenticity at least as those of the Jews*, when we know so very little of the former; when very few or none understand any thing of their language; and when, but three pages afterwards, we are told, that *from the Jesuits alone we can have any tolerable information concerning them*. A set of people, who have no high character for exactness and veracity, and who ought not, I think, to be put on a footing with the whole Jewish nation, however low our opinion of these may be, when they bear attestation to books, wherein their laws and religion were contained.

4. I wish our noble author had been more explicit in telling us, wherein consists the *difference of the proof of the authenticity and meaning of sacred historians*, and of others; and what that proof is, which in this case is necessary, and would be satisfactory. That our care and caution ought to rise in proportion to the importance of the subject we are examining, is true. But it is true also, that we ought not to expect greater evidence than the subject will bear: if we do, we deserve no satisfaction. As to the authenticity of writings, this must depend upon tradition. Written tradition is undoubtedly the strongest. The tradition received by a whole nation, through a long succession of ages, without the least dissent or variation, in a matter about which it concerned them much not to be mistaken in,

in, must in this case have the very highest weight. Better proof of the authenticity of any ancient history we cannot have. And this we have for that of the Old Testament. As to the New, the proof is as strong as possible, and stronger than can be pleaded in favour of any other books; as no others have been in so many hands, or have been so often quoted, translated, and appealed to, from the very age in which they were wrote, through every intermediate century, and in every country in which they were known, to this very day. So that, if by the different proof required be meant a greater number of attestations; we may truly boast, that our sacred writings can lay claim to it. But if any difference in the kind of proof be intended, this cannot be necessary, because in the common course of things it is not possible.

Next, as to the *meaning of sacred and other historians*, what *different proof* of this can there be? The ways of coming at the right sense of authors, whether sacred or profane, must be alike a just knowledge of their language a careful consideration of the context an accurate comparison of parallel places a due use of any other helps which may be proper, and in our reach; such as consultations of learned men, and learned books, which we may usefully apply to, without yielding up our judgment to them universally and implicitly These methods are common to all writings. And if there are any peculiar to such as are sacred, which may be requisite to understand these, they are an humility

and docility of spirit, free from bad prejudices, open to conviction, and willing to receive the truth . . . and prayer to God for his assistance in this matter . . . But perhaps neither of these was the difference in his Lordship's view.

5. The reader has my sentiments already about the diminution of traditionary proof. Nor can I see that *the authenticity of the Sacred Scriptures has suffered*, in this respect, *by time or by any other way whatever*. We are sufficiently apprized who the authors of the several books of the New Testament were. If one or two were anciently doubted, this shews the care of those early ages in a matter of this consequence ; and that they did not proceed rashly or at random, nor admit books into the canon without enquiry or examination ; and therefore when they did admit them, we have reason to receive them ; as we have to receive all such, concerning which they had full assurance from the very first. What they rejected, they knew, were not the writings of the Apostles ; and might see in them many things inconsistent with these, which therefore shewed it impossible for them to be genuine. There is then no room to accuse, or to suspect, the primitive church of not proceeding with integrity in this matter. And indeed, we have positive proof enough of this, when we remember the veneration they had for their Sacred Scriptures, the hazards they ran, and the torments they endured, rather than yield these up, or betray or deny the doctrines contained in them.

It

It may be difficult to be assured of every particular concerning St. Mark and St. Luke; though, that the one was a companion of St. Paul, and the other of St. Peter, is, I believe, universally allowed. But that difficulty will not affect the authenticity of their Gospels. This rests on the same bottom with St. Matthew's and St. John's, as indeed the Acts and all the Epistles do. And the noble author should admit them all, or none, on the same testimony of the *Fathers and Doctors of the Church, who not only bear this testimony separately; but assembled in a council at Laodicea . . . made a canon of these.* This, by the way, was a council in the fourth century. And as he thought proper to depend upon them in so weighty a point, I would hope this at least must be excepted out of the general censure against the councils in this century, and *deserve more regard than that of Trent.* Would his Lordship indeed admit the Gospels on the testimony of the council of Trent? . . . We have seen, how variously this great man thought of the Apocalypse. He ascribed it to *Cerinthus*, though it has nothing of Cerinthianism in it . . . to *some other enthusiast*, to *some mad Judaizing Christian*. Strange, when he owned, that it had *maintained great credit in the Church*, as the work of St. John, *for some centuries before the year 360.* This must carry it up near St. John's days, if not quite to them. *SOME centuries* must be two at least, and should, in strict propriety of language, mean *three.* And this will bring us to the middle of the first century. And the question then

will be, whether the Church in those very early times, or Lord Bolingbroke at this distance from them, were the best judges concerning the author of this book?

6. And thus much for the authenticity and Canon of the New Testament. With regard to the Old, his Lordship has revived some cavils, and attacks it with vehemence. This must first rest, as we have seen, on the care of the Jewish Church. And we may add, that the authenticity and divinity of it is allowed to be supposed by Christianity; as it was certainly believed by Christ and his Apostles. On this account therefore, were there no other, it deserves our religious regard and reverence. Its original authority is thus confirmed and ratified anew. . . . But we are told, that *we cannot be assured of the authors of any books of it, besides the Pentateuch*. Will he then allow, that the Pentateuch was written by Moses, and is genuine? I fear not, as he says, *it is not at all improbable, that the traditions here contained, were compiled after Moses's time*. This however will fall under our next head. Let us confine our thoughts at present to the other books of the Old Testament. Many of the authors of these are well known. The names of the prophets stand in their respective writings: David, Samuel, and Solomon are universally allowed to have composed some works, which are ascribed to them. Nor is there any good reason to set aside, or to question, this tradition. To say, that any of these writings were compiled after the Jewish captivity, is talking at large, without proof or pro-

probability. Some others indeed were so; as Esra, Nehemiah, and the Chronicles. But the two former of these bear their author's names, and these very respectable names too. The last has not this advantage, nor a few other books. But this is no objection against their authority. They are doubtless as ancient as they pretend to be. And though we cannot be infallibly assured of their true writers; they, who first received them, might, and most probably were. In a word, many other old books of great use lye under the same difficulty, as men employed in critical searches well know.

7. But *the Jewish canon was long in settling*. I see not how it could be otherwise. It could not be settled, before it was completed. And a long series of time passed, between the writing of the first book and the last. If it be meant, that Esra, or whoever is supposed to have settled their canon, was a long time about it; neither does this appear to be fact, or if it were, appear to be in the least to its discredit. Care, enquiry, and judgment were proper in such a work.

8. We are told, that the *Jewish Scriptures were lost more than once, and how they were last recovered, is unknown, or whether they were recovered at all, is doubted*. Could indeed this be made fully to appear, it might shake their credit: but it neither has, nor can. Nor do I know, what the noble writer intended here to insinuate or allude to. I see no reason to suspect these books of being forged; nor can the time be assigned, when it was possible to forge them, and
palm

palm them as genuine upon the Jewish nation, and in a few years after on the rest of the world. Besides the different stiles they are wrote in, according to the different fations and educations of their authors, and the harmony and agreement between them all, leaves us no room to deny either their authenticity, or their truth.

IT cannot be expected, that in these strictures I should enter into a fuller account of these things; which indeed would be needless, as they have been shewn at large over and over, and may be found in many books already extant, by those who chuse to enquire into them. What I have farther to offer on this subject will come under the review of the tenth head, which is *concerning Moses, his history, and law.*

Here it is owned, that there was such a person as Moses, *the leader and legislator* of the Jews; that he *proved his mission by miracles, the least part of which were convincing*; that *he made a scruple of teaching a future state, because it was not revealed to him*; and therefore we must imagine him to have been a man of credit, and to be believed, when he taught other points as what had been revealed to him; that the *name*, by which he describes the Supreme Being, is *sublime and proper*; we may add, more expressive of his necessary existence, and incommunicable perfections, than any which philosophy, when most improved and refined, hath ever given; that *most sublime ideas of God* are taught in other parts of the Old Testament; that *the traditions of the Pentateuch are very ancient*; that the account

count there given of the *longer lives of the first men is probable*; that the law of the *Jews* was sufficient to maintain peace and good order among themselves; which I apprehend to be the end, and the perfection, of all national laws; and that *Christianity is founded on Judaism*, and the redemption on the fall; so that this latter dispensation supposes and proves the truth of the other.

Lay all these things together, and allow them their just weight, and you cannot, I think, have any low or contemptible notion of Moses, or the writings ascribed to him. A more honourable character of both can scarce be given. And no one, who pretends to the name of a Christian, can disbelieve the truth, or renounce the authority, of this most ancient work; though there may be, as it cannot but be expected that there would be, some difficulties in it, which at this time of day can hardly be cleared. Longinus, one of the best critics of heathen antiquity, bears a noble, and we may be sure, a disinterested, testimony, not only to the authenticity, but to the sublimity and beauty of the account of the creation. The relations, which follow this account, instruct us in several events of great and universal importance; which lead us not only to the belief and worship and obedience of the One True God, but to consider the whole world as related together, and descended from one common parent. And lastly, if we view Moses only as a legislator, he deserves to be ranked among, nay to have preference above, all the celebrated legislators of antiquity.

How

How shall I now enter upon the unpleasing task, which my method calls upon me to undertake; and set before the reader in one view the very different, the very shocking accounts of this great man, which Lord Bolingbroke has thought proper to give in the philosophical essays? But this must be done, that we may form an impartial judgment.

- Vol. I. It is said, that the sacred authors
 P. 135 writ agreeably to all the vulgar notions of the ages and countries, in which they lived.
- p. 147. The Jews borrowed their knowledge from the Egyptians.
- p. 287. Adam's original knowledge and perfections, as derived from God, are ridiculed.
- p. 296. The simplicity of true theism could never subsist in the figures of poetry.
- p. 299. The Mosaic account is plainly inconsistent with itself, as it stands in the books we have under the name of Moses.
- p. 317. Among the superstitions of Mosaic institutions there was one, which could be charged neither on the Egyptian, nor any other heathen nation, and which surpassed the most extravagant of theirs he brought the notions of the True God down to the low and gross conceptions of the multitude, and exposed the majesty of this Awful Being to their profanations.
- p. 318. God is said to have given himself a name, a very magnificent one indeed, and such a one as might denote the Supreme Being; but still a name, by which he was to be distinguished as the tutelary God of Abraham,

ham, Isaac, and Jacob, of one family first, and then of one nation particularly, and almost exclusively of all others.

The history of the creation not to be re-Vol. II. conciled to nature, reason, philosophy, nor p. 151. natural theology (for natural theology teaches us to think of God in a manner very opposite to the ideas, which Moses gives us of the Supreme Being and of his operations) &c.

The chronology, founded on the genealogies in the book of Genesis, supposes the tradition of these revelations, by which God communicated himself to man, to have been preserved so little a time after the deluge, that it gives a color to suppose all the nations of the world . . . ignorant of the One True God ;

Or totally ignorant of the deluge. p. 198.

The account of the rebellions of the Israelites in an age of miracles attempted to be disapproved. p. 206.

Unexceptionable revelations, real miracles, and certain traditions could never be ineffectual. p. 209.

The immense duration of the systems of created beings. p. 224.

In the history and law of Moses, beasts as well as men, are represented and treated as accountable creatures . . . At the hand of every beast will I require, &c. Thou shalt destroy even the beast, Deut. 13. In case of bestiality the beast was also to be killed. Vol. IV. p. 5. p. 6.

The first principle of the Israelites policy ecclesiastical and civil, was insociability. p. 94.

The

- p. 106. The judgments of his chosen people were often repugnant to the law of nature.
A spirit of injustice, which established one rule for themselves, and another for every other person, ran through all their judicial proceedings.
- p. 136. God represented in the Old Testament as approving and commanding the most abominable violations of the general laws of nature.
- p. 138. The whole system of the law of Moses, like the whole system of his conduct, was founded on murder. See the thirteenth chapter of Deuteronomy.
- p. 145. Moses's miracles tended to the destruction of mankind . . . Moses exercised, and commanded the exercise of, a political power, the most tyrannical, the most contrary to the laws of nature, and the most irreconcilable to every sentiment of humanity.
- p. 151. God, according to Moses, degraded to the character of an unjust and cruel tyrant, who authorized, and even commanded, his ministers expressly to punish without measure, without discernment, and without forms of justice. This Mr. Locke believed.
- p. 263. The account of the fall of man is, in all its circumstances, absolutely irreconcilable to every idea we can frame of wisdom, justice, and goodness, to say nothing of the dignity of the Supreme Being.
- p. 282. They who compiled the written law, from Esdras to Simon the just, had as little discernment in the choice of their materials, as they, who compiled the traditions of the oral law afterwards.

The God of Moses is partial, unjust, and Vol. V. cruel. p. 217.

Many traditions, though fabulous, leave p. 244 no reason to doubt, that arts and sciences, and even barbarity, were carried from the west to the east, as well as from the east to the west, in ages quite unknown to us; which is enough to shake the authority of that particular history, wherein it is reported, that the world was re-peopled from one spot, and by one family, after an universal deluge.

The tradition of Noah's deluge is vouch- p. 272- ed by no other authority than that of Moses . . . And yet it is impossible to conceive, that the memory of such a catastrophe should have been known only by one people, and that not the most ancient neither, or being known to all, should have been preserved only, in one corner of the earth . . . this tradition then liable to suspicion.

It is impossible to excuse all the puerile, ro- p. 284- mantic, and absurd circumstances in Moses's history of the creation, which nothing could produce but the habit of dealing in trifling traditions, and a most profound ignorance. It is impossible to read what he writ on this subject, without feeling contempt for him, as a philosopher, and horror as a divine.

The sun much older probably than our Vol. V. world. p. 293.

The legislator of the Jews included no p. 331- other than one solar system in his idea of the universe.

In the Pentateuch are such evident marks p. 333- of falsehood, as can be objected to no other writings,

- writings, except to professed romances, nor even always to them.
- p. 338. Moses's writings have no historical authenticity. He was not cotemporary with the creation of which he writes . . . his history not received in the age immediately following the publication of it.
- p. 339. Much of the history, and some of the law, perhaps, contained in the writings ascribed to Moses, came down to those who quote them, by traditions of uncertain original, though they were all alike ascribed by the Jews, to the same legislator.
- p. 340. If the Pentateuch was public before the time of David, it does not follow, that Moses
- p. 341. was the author of it. . . time enough between them to make fabulous traditions pass for authentic history.
- p. 343. The whole history of the Old Testament founded on incredible anecdotes, consists of little else.
- p. 344. When we speak of the Pentateuch, as of an authentic history, and quote Moses as solemnly as Don Quixote did Turpin, are we much less mad than he was? When I sit down to read this history . . . I am ready to think myself transported into a sort of fairy land, where every thing is done by magic and enchantment.
- p. 350. The Jews deserve, on many accounts, to be trusted the least . . . it is improbable their history should have been written, and impossible that it should have been preserved, with a strict regard to truth.
- p. 357. The law of the Jews produced a legal injustice and cruelty to others.

Jacob's

Jacob's vow, Gen. 28. most impiously in- p. 358.
terested and craving.

A perfect law would produce its effect p. 360.
by a certain moral necessity resulting from
itself.

No law ever operated so weak and so un- p. 361.
certain an effect as the law of Moses did.
This law has proved more ineffectual than
any other.

The most imperfect system of human laws p. 362.
would have been rendered effectual by the
occasional miracles, which supported the
Jewish.

The same passages in the law and pro- p. 364.
phets may be taken in historical, mystical,
literal, and allegorical senses . . . they, who
writ them, knew so little what they writ,
that they foretold some future, when they
imagined they were relating some past
event.

When this God proceeds to the creation p. 369.
of man, he calls on other beings, we know
not by the text how many, to co-operate
with him, and to make man in his and
their likeness. This seems to lay a founda-
tion for Polytheism . . . and is inconsistent
with the Unity of the Godhead.

Moses is charged with teaching the crea- p. 370.
tion of light, and the distinction between
night and day, before the sun, moon, and
stars.

God is made a principal actor with the p. 372.
serpent, and Adam, and Eve.

COULD any one believe, that all this
could come from the same hand, which
wrote the passages we before extracted under
this

this head? If these are just and true, and nothing but truth could force any thing in favour of Moses from one who appears so very averse to him; they are alone a sufficient answer to all this torrent of abuse and censure; which is for the most part absolutely unsupported by any evidence whatever: And where there is really any room for doubt, sufficient answers have been frequently given. Nor have these answers been invalidated by his Lordship, nor the objections received any addition of strength from his pen. In short, if there is any thing new in these passages, it is the spirit with which they are wrote, which may be thought to exceed every thing we have seen before; but which, it is hoped, will not in the opinion of any lover of impartiality or decency, be thought sufficient to discredit the character of the oldest, and hitherto one of the most esteemed writers in the world.

To animadvert on each of these articles at large, would run these papers out into too great a length. I shall therefore endeavour to be short in my reflections upon them.

I. The four first articles, though far from being similar, I shall dismiss under one number; as they are not of equal consequence with those that follow . . . Whoever said, *that the sacred authors writ agreeably to all the vulgar notions of their ages and countries*, went greatly too far. These general words will include any errors about religion, which might be entertained; as well as minuter mistakes, which the study of

of natural philosophy has since disproved. These latter they might fall into without hurting their character: as it was not their design, nor was it necessary for them, to teach right notions of philosophy or astronomy. This my Lord owns of Moses, and it is true of all the others,

His Lordship very peremptorily asserts that the Jews borrowed their knowledge from the Egyptians. This is a disputed question among learned men; and unless an *ipse dixit* will decide it, it remains just where it was. . . . But slaves may be thought less likely to teach their masters, than to be taught by them. Perhaps so; yet it should be considered, that the Jews had not been always slaves; that Joseph in particular, to whom the Egyptians had been so much obliged, and who *was set over all the land*, must have had great sway and influence over them; that till *another king arose, who knew not*, or remembered not, or regarded not, the benefits they had received from him, it is most probable, that his family and relations were held in reverence and esteem, and communicated some knowledge to the people, among whom they sojourned. Moses, it is true, was *brought up in all the learning of the Egyptians*. And yet it is not credible, that he learned his religion and law from them. They, who think the golden calf was taken from one of their idols, can never think the system, wherein all idolatry is so strictly forbidden, borrowed from any thing he saw among them. There is then no reason from hence to doubt the truth of his own account, that

that he received his immediately from heaven.

* Why should *Adam's original perfections, as derived from God, be ridiculed?* Supposing him to be the first man, which nothing is said to disprove, the account given of him appears highly probable. We must suppose him created, not indeed impeccable, which would have been inconsistent with his liberty, but in his full strength both of body and mind . . . When it is said, that *the simplicity of true theism could never subsist in the figures of poetry*, I suppose the poetical parts of the Old Testament are struck at. And this would be to exclude a very great, and a very edifying, part of Scripture. But the observation is not true. Poetry has been thought the first and earliest way, in which religious instructions were conveyed. And those passages of the Old Testament which our noble author owns to give

* I do not deny, that some of the institutions in the Pentateuch were made in conformity with some ancient practices. But these might be innocent ones; they might be borrowed from other nations as well as the Egyptians; they might be derived from the patriarchal times; as, to mention no more, circumcision was. Nay, though we should allow, that the parallel customs were originally Egyptian, yet, this will not render these institutions at all suspected. Why might not these be wise compliances, intended to serve some good end? As we know, that other things were wisely appointed by Moses, in opposition to the Egyptian superstitions? And what one thing is there in the Jewish law common to any of these? I know of none.

give most sublime ideas of the majesty of the Supreme Being, which must in a great measure constitute true theism, are so many fine strains of poetry.

2. Of the following articles, I shall only select such as have some appearance of argument to support them. For general abuse and declamation, of which the greatest part consist, neither deserve, nor need, nor indeed will admit of, any answer . . . By the *magnificent name*, which his Lordship acknowledges *might denote the Supreme Being*, I presume he means, I AM THAT I AM. But how then could he say, that this was a name, *by which God was to be distinguished as the tutelary God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, of one family first, and then of one nation particularly, and almost exclusively of all others.* Does not every one see apparent misrepresentation here, and this grounded on gross inaccuracy? That name most strongly denotes necessary existence. But has this any relation to one family, more than to another? In the next verse indeed he mentions his being the God of their fathers, to whom his promise and covenant had been made; and nothing could be more proper than this to give Moses credence among the Israelites, and to support and encourage their spirits, then almost broken with the severity of their bondage. But can this be fairly construed as a declaration, that he was their God, I will not say *almost*, but in any degree, *exclusively of all other people*? It cannot, any farther, than as all others had in a manner, as far as they could, excluded him by their idolatry and disobedience. Nor
can

can the same be collected from any other passage in the Pentateuch. In this God is always represented as the Universal Creator, Lord, and Governor, of the whole world; distinguished from all idols and local deities, and infinitely superior in power and excellency to all that the heathen worshipped, whether in heaven, or in earth. Thus is He described, even in those passages, wherein his particular protection and blessing of the people of Israel is gratefully acknowledged: the songs of Moses will afford instances of this.

And it is farther observable, that neither is he considered in these, nor indeed in any other parts of Scripture, as the tutelary God of the Jews, in the same sense, in which the heathen deities were respected as the guardians of any particular kingdoms. The piety, integrity and virtue of the Jews were the only conditions, on which they could ever expect his defence and favour. And whenever they swerved from these, they were forsaken by him, and given over into the hand of their enemies. Whereas the tutelary Gods of other nations are represented as constantly and fondly espousing their cause, without any regard to the goodness of this, or of their characters. In a word, though God is styled by Moses the God of Abraham, &c. yet this no way degrades him from his natural dignity. *All the families of the earth are* at the same time said to be in his view and thoughts, to be called and *blessed by him*, when they should return from their idolatries.

3. The

3. The chronology of the book of Genesis has its difficulties, as indeed all ancient chronology has. Lord Bolingbroke observes, that it *supposes the tradition of the Divine Revelations to have been preserved so little a time after the deluge, that it gives a color to suppose all the world ignorant of the One True God, or totally ignorant of the deluge.* This is expressed somewhat obscurely. If I understand him right, his meaning is, that according to that chronology, it was but a little time after the deluge, that the world became idolatrous, and insensible of so severe a judgment. And this, I suppose, intended to insinuate the improbability of this account, of the chronology, if not of the deluge itself . . . Now the book of Genesis has no where, that I know, pointed out exactly the commencement of idolatry after the flood. And unless we knew this, we are not sure of the very foundation of the objection. There might have been an interval of time long enough; gradually to introduce errors and superstitions in religion. Gradually: For there is no occasion, and it would be unnatural, to suppose a total defection taking place at once.

If the worship of the Sun was, as most learned men believe, the first kind of idolatry; it is not improbable, that they, who first practised this, might at the same time retain a belief of the One True God, and of the flood. The sun might be considered as the most glorious visible emblem or image of the Deity, and no dishonour might then be intended to God, by the honor paid to his Creature. I am not apologizing for

this, which soon ended in gross idolatry. However, should we suppose this sin to have begun in the days of Abraham, which is perhaps as early, perhaps much earlier than we ought to fix it; yet this was above four hundred years after the flood. And when we consider how soon the impression of past mercies and judgments too, especially of such as were not sent to ourselves, wears off; we shall not, I think, be surprized, if in such a course of years, the tradition even of the deluge was not sufficient to deter some men from idolatry; a vice, of which we have no accounts before the flood, and therefore which might not be supposed to have drawn this vengeance on the world. The history therefore of this may be very credible, and is not in the least invalidated, nor even in appearance inconsistent, on account of what happened so long after it.

Nor will this tradition be weakened by what this noble author afterwards says against it. Indeed the strength of prejudice cannot appear stronger, than when *fabulous traditions* of what is supposed to have happened in *ages quite unknown*, are set up to *shake the authority of this history of Moses*. This is really opposing error, allowed error, to truth, and gross darkness to light . . . But, *the tradition of Noah's deluge is vouched by no other authority*. Rather, it is not related in all its awful circumstances so fully by any subsequent writer. For learned men, laymen as well as divines, have found some very strong confirming traces of it in heathen antiquity. So that it is not true, that the general memory of it was *preserved only in one corner*

corner of the earth. See the excellent Mr. Ray's *Phisico-Theological Discourses*.

But might it not have been expected, that other writers should have been more particular on so interesting a subject? I answer, the authority of one plain history is not to be shaken by the bare silence of others; and much less by these not being equally circumstantial. This would make the wildest work in the study of history, and leave us little or nothing to depend upon. It is not to be wondered at, that in a long course of years error should mix itself in traditions of facts, and occasion their being first disbelieved and then forgot. To learn the truth of these, it is usual to have recourse to such writers as lived nearest the times when they happened, Moses therefore, tho' we should not insist on the regard due to him as an inspired writer, deserves far more credit in this case, than any succeeding historians can claim; the earliest of all heathen ones writing many centuries after him.

4. Let us next consider whether *the account of the rebellions of the Israelites in an age of miracles* be improbable. The noble author thinks, that if these and the revelations were *real*, they must have been *effectual*; that whereas *a perfect law would produce its effect by a moral necessity resulting from itself*, and *the most imperfect system of human laws would have been rendered effectual by the occasional miracles which supported the Jewish*, the law of Moses has proved *more ineffectual than any other* . . . Now, for very many centuries this is not

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true.

true. We own however the case was so at first. Long after the giving of the law, the nation of the Jews were very prone to idolatry. Nay in the midst of miracles, they on every occasion murmured and were disobedient; and even at the first, made them a molten calf. This is their great reproach. But it is unjust to reproach the law, or disbelieve the miracles, on this account. This only shews, that the very strongest proofs and evidences will not always prevail over obstinacy and unruly inclinations. While human liberty continues, men cannot be forced into conviction, or into duty: they may be guilty of the most absurd and unaccountable conduct. There is no such thing as any *moral necessity resulting from* any law, however *perfect* it be, to prevent this. We need, I think, no instances of this truth. Nor is the instance of the Jews the only one recorded, where miracles themselves have been slighted. And though we may be apt to flatter ourselves, that had we lived in their days, we should not have been partakers with them in their iniquities; yet this is much more than we can be sure of. We may now consider them with the astonishment and detestation they deserve: but we are now out of the reach of the temptations to them, and at a distance from those evil customs which then prevailed. And if we reflect, how often we have sinned in direct contradiction to the clearest voice of reason and conscience, we shall not, I presume, pronounce the perverseness of the Jews to be incredible.

5. The

5. The texts, which the noble author produces, do not represent *beasts as accountable creatures*. In order to create in the mind the deepest sense, and the strongest detestation, of the guilt of murder, idolatry, and bestiality, the brutes, especially when they have been instrumental, though without guilt, in these vices, are ordered to be killed: which law appears highly agreeable to nature. Thus also future accidents of the same horrid nature may be prevented; and the guilty owners of such cattle are in some measure punished by the loss of them. And what is there in this, which can deserve so strange a censure, or admit so violent an interpretation, as that above?

6. *Infociability, injustice, repugnance to the law of nature*, are charged upon the statutes and judgments of the Jews. *The law of Moses, like his conduct*, is said to be founded on murder. *His miracles tended to the destruction of mankind. God, according to him, an unjust and cruel tyrant . . .* It is impossible for any pious mind to read such passages without horror. The fullest proof is but sufficient to justify them. And yet all the proof, which has been vouchsafed us, is, that Moses is represented as an instrument in God's hand of punishing the pride and blasphemy of the Egyptians, of delivering the people of Israel from unjust and cruel servitude, and of propounding a law, wherein all idolatry was strictly forbidden, and all idolaters to be punished with death. If the miracles said to have been worked by him were real, whether they were of a beneficial or of a punitive nature,

(though they did not *all* tend to the destruction of mankind) they must be owned sufficient evidences of his Divine commission; and if so, we may be very sure that he neither did, nor commanded, any thing, but what was just and right, though at this distance of time there should be some parts of his laws which we cannot account for. They are in general a wise body of statutes, contrived, as his Lordship could not help acknowledging, to *maintain peace and good order among the Jews themselves*, and to make them a religious and an happy people. What this illustrious writer calls *insociability*, may more properly be termed, an avoiding all communion with the idolatrous and scandalously wicked nations round them; and what he styles *cruelty*, was in truth no other than in pursuance of the Divine orders denouncing the Divine vengeance on them. And if the giving such orders were injustice or cruelty in God, it will follow, that he cannot take vengeance on any guilty people. For surely he may do this, not only immediately by his own arm, but by the means and instrumentality of any other people: as we have all reason to think he frequently does. And though in the common course of Providence he does not give out his express commands to this purpose, as he did to the Jews; yet this is no objection against these commands. In fine, not to dwell any longer on a point, which has been so well considered by the writers in defence of Christianity, whose vindications are left totally untouched and in their full strength by Lord Bolingbroke, we may and ought to regard

regard the Canaanites, &c. as an example set up and held forth *in terrorem* to all nations in all times ; that they may avoid such idolatry and shocking immorality, and be encouraged to believe in, and to serve the True God only. And thus will this part of sacred history be ever profitable, and the design of recording and preserving it fully answered.

7. As to the fall of man, if we believe his Lordship, it is *in all its circumstances absolutely irreconcilable to every idea we can frame of wisdom, justice, and goodness, to say nothing of the dignity of the Supreme Being.* But this is mere assertion without the least proof. Nay the contrary is most apparent to any one, who seriously considers the whole history. Nothing can be more credible, than that man was created upright ; that he might be seduced from his duty by a wicked being, superior in power and subtlety to himself ; that he might thus expose himself to misery ; that God, though foreknowing that he would fall, yet having created him free, but not impeccable, might permit him to do so ; that God might pronounce a sentence on him, and one still severer on his seducer ; and lastly, that he might leave some distant hopes of his restoration and recovery. This is plainly the substance of the account. And though indeed *God is made a principal actor in it*, yet his infinite wisdom, justice, goodness, and dignity are well preserved. And I am sure many phenomena, which we are to this hour witness, nay conscious, of, very much confirm the truth of the history ; which will not be set

aside by our ignorance, in one or two minuter articles.

8. Lord Bolingbroke objects against the *historical authenticity of Moses's writings. He was not cotemporary with the creation of which he writes* And is no history then authentic, or true, which I supposed his Lordship meant here, but such as are wrote by cotemporaries? Grant that this circumstance is an advantage in favour of an author: yet is there no way of coming at truth and certainty of facts without being witness of them? Or was it possible for any man to be witness of the whole process of the creation, some part of which must have been, before he was himself created? Tradition might then sufficiently convey many particulars: and inspiration might more easily instruct Moses in the truth of the whole. This is the advantage he pretends to and claims: and this character must be proved to be false, before we can conclude, that he could not know the truth of what he wrote.

But it is said farther, that *his history was not received in the age immediately following the publication of it.* This, we may be sure, is more than the noble writer could possibly know; and therefore, if ever any thing was, is said at random. That the history and the law of Moses is cited and alluded to by subsequent authors of the same nation, is certain. That a body of laws said to be attended with, and confirmed by, such stupendous and solemn miracles, should in any age be invented and palmed upon the nation, as the work of their legislator; That

That traditions of an uncertain original should be ascribed to him ; That the Jews should ever have submitted to so burthensome an institution, which they appeared so continually prone to swerve from, unless they had all reason to be satisfied of its Divine authority ; are points too absurd to be supposed, and indeed impossible ever to have happened. It was therefore unworthy of his Lordship's character thus to attack the authenticity of Moses by such assertions and suggestions, as would overthrow the authenticity of every ancient author whatever. We may as well say, that there were never such persons as Moses and David, as that the writings ascribed to them were not their's ; or that the *Pentateuch*, tho' *public before the time of David*, should be nothing but *fabulous traditions* compiled after Moses. Works so respectable in themselves, and of such mighty consequence, could not have been falsely introduced ; and whenever forged, the forgery must have presently appeared.

Equally groundless is the parallel between the written and the oral law. No man, who has ever read both, can put these on a level. Could all the objections against the former be made good, they would not amount to the least part of the shameful and abominable impossibilities of the latter. And therefore the materials from which these are supposed to have been *compiled*, could not be equally authentic. Not that there is any reason to imagine the written law so late compiled, as the time of Esdras, if any thing else be meant, than the collecting together the books of the Old Testament,

and forming them into one body or Canon of Scripture.

9. I never could read that *vow of Jacob*, in his journey to Padan-Aram, after he had received the assurances and promises of God's protection and blessing in a night vision, without being particularly affected with it ; and am therefore surprized to find our noble Lord call it *most impiously interested and craving*. Let it speak for itself. " If
 " God will be with me, and will keep me
 " in this way that I go, and will give me
 " bread to eat, and raiment to put on ; so
 " that I come again to my father's house in
 " peace : then shall the Lord be my God,
 " and this stone which I have set for a
 " pillar, shall be God's house : And of all
 " that thou shalt give me, I will surely
 " give the tenth to thee." Had this passage appeared in any heathen author, I am confident it must have been admired. I can see nothing like impiety or avarice in it. On the contrary, dependance on the Divine Providence, contentedness, and resolutions of consecrating a part of his substance to the uses of religion and charity, breathe through the whole. If any thing is stipulated for here, it is the common protection of Heaven, and the common necessities of life. Jacob enters into an holy covenant with his Maker, in consequence of the gracious promises he had just before received. He expresses no doubt of the truth of these promises, but thankfully accepts them. Learned men have observ'd, that the passage would have been better rendered, *SINCE God will be with me, &c.* But should it be granted, that

that there is something conditional implied, yet surely no one, without very strong prejudices about him, can see any thing *impiously interested and craving*.

10. The different senses, in which some passages of the Old Testament may be taken, will create no difficulty, nor render either their authority, or their meaning, dubious. They may be conceived to be at the same time historical, and typical or prophetical, and to be true both in a literal and allegorical sense. Nay, on the supposition of inspiration, it is very easy to imagine, that the Holy Spirit might sometimes have more distant views than the penmen of Scripture. Points, which were no way necessary for these to know, might be of great consequence to be foretold to future ages. And in such a case, it would be very unfair to say, that the penmen *did not know what they writ*, though they were not made acquainted with the whole scheme of Providence, or the whole intendment and design of their own predictions. I readily own, that we should be cautious, how we indulge fancy or invention in assigning such double senses. But we are justified in doing so, when the event in the plainest and most striking manner corresponds with the words, so that it cannot but be thought originally aimed at in them . . . or when these are so interpreted and applied by subsequent writers, whom we have reason to think inspired by the same spirit of truth.

11. *Let us make man* are, we know, words, which have been differently understood. But they are not *inconsistent with*
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the Unity of the Godhead, the truth of which is taught in almost every page of the Old Testament. Polytheism was, I believe, never before collected from them, or thought any consequence of them, either by those, who have applied them to the Persons of the Trinity; or by others, who consider this, as an honourable phrase and manner of speaking. Neither of them suppose any creature to be here called upon. And indeed, it would be absurd to suppose the assistance of creatures used in the formation of man, when all the other parts of the creation are represented as made by God only.

12. The charge against Moses as *teaching the creation of light, and the distinction between night and day, before the sun, moon, and stars*, is an old one. Now, suppose that he did not here speak with philosophic accuracy, yet was it his design to teach philosophy? Was he any more obliged to do this, than to *explain the Copernican system*? Could such a defect be any reflection upon him, as an historian or a deliverer of laws from God? No most certainly. We have heard Lord Bollingbroke supposing, that *the Sun is probably much older than our world*; which appears to break and dissolve the general harmony and connection of the system, which was established at the beginning. Here then is an error much more unpardonable, than what we have been considering, supposing it to be one. And yet if the Volumes before me had contained nothing more inoffensive, they had passed uncensured.

However,

However, it deserves to be considered, whether this account of Moses be so much as an error in philosophy. To prove it such, it must be proved, that no degree of light could possibly exist before, and out of, the sun; * it must be proved that the elemental fire, of which the sun is composed, and to which the idea of light is annexed, could not be called forth and separated from the universal darkness and confusion of the chaos, and continue in that state some time, before it was formed into the solar globe; it must be proved that there is any impropriety in describing this as the first act of creation, and the sun as produced afterwards . . . † And lastly it must be proved, that there could be no measure of time but the sun and moon; that this darkness and light thus parted from each other could not then constitute night and day, succeeding each other in the same spaces of time, as night and

* On the contrary, there are said to be now visible in the firmament large lucid spaces, which receive not their light from the sun, or any stars. See Phil. Transf. No. 347. p. 390. or Jones's abridgment. p. 225.

† It is remarkable, that Moses describes the production of grass, herbs, and trees, on the third day. Whereas the creation of the sun was on the fourth. Hence an important conclusion follows, that the sun was not, as many of the heathen thought it, the original cause of vegetation. And who can say, that this error, the parent of idolatry, might not be in the sacred historian's thoughts, and be designed to be prevented by this account?

and day now do by the revolution of the earth on its own axis ; and that Moses could not without absurdity make use of the terms night and day on this occasion, as other words are frequently used and applied to similar things by way of anticipation . . . And yet, I humbly apprehend, that none of these negatives can be proved. Such niceties we may not be able to reach : and therefore the authority of Moses will stand unimpeached.

AND thus much for Moses and his writings. The eleventh head relates to *Jesus Christ and his apostles*. And here his *Divine and human natures*, his unspotted *innocence*, the excellence of his *preaching*, his *miracles*, his being *at least the Messiah foretold by the prophets*, his *authority superior to the natural and Mosaical law*, his *sending his disciples to all nations*, who *established his church among them*, who *worked miracles to prove their mission*, all this Lord Bolingbroke expressly acknowledges. And even St. Paul's doctrine he owns *agreeable to the laws of nature*, and his *gospel in fundamentals the same as the other apostles*. Would not any one imagine from this account, that his Lordship was perfectly sound and orthodox in his belief concerning the person, the offices, the works of our Lord ? What more could any Christian have owned in so short a compass ? Let me beg the closest attention to these parts of the Essays, let them be allowed their full and just influence on the mind ; and there can be no danger from such as the following.

St.

St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, Vol. II. shews great cabalistical skill about Melchise-p. 182. dek, and grounds on such forced allusions as might pass in the school of Gamaliel, the least conclusive reasoning that was ever heard out of it.

The Trinity not early reconciled to thep. 233. Unity of God.

Dr. Barrow talking in a theological cantp. 281. more worthy of Paul, than of a man like him.

A better system of Ethics to be hadp. 306. from the heathen moralists, than from the Gospels.

The sublime and peculiarly Christian pre-p. 308. cepts never observed.

... little consistent with the law of na-p. 309. ture.

Duties enjoined in the sermon on thep. 310. mount by no means practicable in the general society of mankind.

The Gospel of Christ, one thing, of St. P. 328. Paul another.

Christ's Revelation not to be supplied byp. 330. his Apostles, by Paul particularly.

These additions, though made by thep. 331. same authority, make a change in the covenant.

The intire plan of Divine Wisdom in thep. 334. mission of Christ, and the redemption of man, not to be reduced to a coherent, intelligible, and reasonable system of doctrines and facts.

Paul the author of a new Gospel, as hep. 337. in effect says of himself.

The

p. 341. The mystery of calling the Gentiles inconsistent with the declarations and practice of Christ.

p. 346. St. Paul a loose paraphraser, a cabalistical commentator, as much at least as any ancient or modern Rabbin . . . the father of artificial theology.

p. 347. Teach all nations, means only the Jews dispersed in all nations.

p. 351. Inspiration sufficient to keep St. Paul from falling into those faults, want of order and perspicuity, into which none but the meanest of uninspired writers are apt to fall . . . His Gospel, where it is intelligible, is often absurd, or profane or trifling. Witness passive obedience, and absolute prede-

p. 352. stination . . . and the woman's praying with her head covered.

Vol. II. The Messiah intended rather to reform
p. 376. and to graft upon Judaism, than to abolish it.

p. 407. As the heathens took notions of mediation and intercession, so they took others of atonement and expiation, from the characters of men, and of government.

Vol. III. Paul was no disciple . . . received nothing
p. 16. immediately from Christ.

p. 28. St. Paul charged with impudence on account of his Revelations.

p. 60. Less than the whole would not satisfy the Church: and St. Peter accuses them accordingly of fraud and of lying to the Holy Ghost; because they had given no more than they could spare.

p. 98. St. Paul's extraordinary vocation known to none but himself.

Peter

Peter and Paul called inconsistent wri-p. 146.
ters.

Two consubstantial persons, as the Father p. 148.
and Son, cannot be intelligibly distinguished
from one another; and it is of the utmost
absurdity to advance, that the same Person
intercedes with himself.

The orthodox doctrine of the Trinity was p. 149.
never taught explicitly and positively by any
Divine authority.

Various Scriptures and traditions in the p. 151.
primitive ages deposed against the Trinity.

It was impossible to shew, by any subtlety p. 155.
of logic, that this doctrine was not poly-
theistical, since the admission of three, or
three hundred Gods, is equally so.

The Nicene Counsel supposed to consist p. 160.
of 2048, of which only 318 were unani-
mous in declaring the Divinity of Christ.

Absolute predestination, though disputed p. 174.
by some, is held in general to be ortho-
dox.

Christ scarce shewed himself to the few, p. 221.
who were said to have seen him, in such a
manner, as they could know by it, certainly,
that it was he whom they had seen
St. Paul deserves no credit, when he affirms,
against the whole tenor of the Gospels,
that he and above five hundred brethren at
once had seen him after his resurrection.
Both these events, the resurrection and as-
cension, passed in a very private manner.
There were no witnesses, properly called so,
of his resurrection. There were few of his
ascension.

The Trinity and many other great points p. 313.
of Christian faith first taught or determined
several

several ages after the immediate disciples of Christ were dead.

p. 358. I dare not use theological familiarity, and talk of imitating God.

Vol. IV. All the ends of matrimony answered by

p. 109. one man having several wives.

p. 110. Though not by one woman's having several husbands.

p. 112. A well-ordered polygamy caused a prodigious increase of people.

p. 113. Provides the most effectual means for the generation and education of children . . .

Yet immediately after it is owned, that monogamy will unite the care of both parents in breeding up subjects of the commonwealth.

p. 119. Without divorces, monogamy is an absurd, unnatural, and cruel imposition.

p. 121. Ill management of family affairs, or an intolerable and incurable ill humor, good reasons surely for divorces.

p. 125. Incestuous marriages not prohibited by the law of nature.

p. 129. If natural law does not directly prohibit conjunctions between parents and children, it does not permit them neither in so full a manner, as to give them that sanction, which other marriages called incestuous have.

p. 171. Neither reason nor experience will lead us to enquire what propitiation God will accept.

p. 268. Our ideas of moral attributes will lead us to think, that God would have been satisfied more agreeably to his mercy and goodness, without any expiation, upon the repentance of the offenders, and more agreeably

ably to his justice, with any other expiation, rather than with that of his son.

The nicest casuist would be puzzled by Vol. IV. reconciling the notion of fitness, and the innocence and the death of Christ. p. 269.

But nothing in the reason of the thing, p. 273. nor in the most superstitious of their prejudices, could lead the heathens to imagine so much rigor in one God, as to exact that another should be sacrificed even by men, who meant no expiation, and in whom it was a murder, not a sacrifice; nor so much humility and condescension in another, as to make him submit to be this Divine victim.

The vague and undetermined sense, and p. 285. the ambiguous dark expression, of the Bible, have led sacred writers and others to suppose prophecies applicable to Christ, when none such were intended.

The love of God to man, in sending his Vol. V. Son to die for him, will appear partiality as p. 175. great, as that which the Jews assumed that he had shewn in preferring their nation to all the nations of the earth. The Justice will appear injustice in all the circumstances of the fall, and in the redemption of man by the propitiatory sacrifice of an innocent person. This goodness will appear cruelty, when it is considered, that the propitiation was made by tormenting, and spilling the blood of the victim: And in short, injustice and cruelty will appear inconsistently united in this circumstance, that mankind could not have been redeemed, if the Jews had received, instead of crucifying, the Messiah; and yet that they were rejected then, and have

have been punished ever since, for not receiving, and for crucifying him.

THE reader has here a very different face of things, from that before exhibited. And the one is a perfect contradiction to the other. If the former character of our Lord and his apostles be true, this latter is both false and injurious. But to come to particulars.

1. St. Paul we find spoken against in terms of great bitterness and reproach. But I shall take notice of nothing alleged against him, which has not the appearance of some foundation. General accusations and censures can hurt only those who use them . . . In order to shew, that our Saviour's priesthood was superior to the Levitical, he quotes a passage of the Old Testament, which declares him an eternal priest after the order of Melchisedek, who was different from, and prior to, Aaron, both with regard to time and dignity. And he observes, that this Melchisedek, according to the description of him in the book of Genesis, was like unto the Son of God, and a proper forerunner, pattern, and type of him. In all this there is nothing *forced* or *cabalistical*. The account is true, and the reasoning strictly conclusive. There is nothing assumed, but that the text, "Thou art a priest for ever," &c. relates to the Messiah, which at that time, we may presume, was not doubted, and which at this time cannot be disproved, indeed cannot be differently applied, agreeably to the rules of sound criticism.

ticism. Therefore the conclusion from hence is fairly drawn.

St. Paul's Gospel being allowed to be in *fundamentals the same as the other apostles*, will, I hope, on second thoughts be also allowed to be the same with that of Christ. For how shall we know what Christ's Gospel was, but from the writings of the apostles?

Christ told his disciples before his death, that " he had many things to say, which " they could not bear then, but that he " would send them the Spirit to lead " them into all truth." We cannot therefore be surprized, if some doctrines should be more fully taught and explained in the Epistles, than they were by Christ in his life-time; and if some others, not mentioned by him, should be insisted upon therein. This may be called *supplying* or compleating his revelation, *i. e.* what he had personally revealed before his death. But still the whole is his revelation, and published by his authority. And if the other apostles had power to do this, why must St. Paul be particularly excepted, whose call was miraculous, who received his doctrine immediately from Christ, and whose writings are as fully authenticated as any of the Gospels themselves? The relation of his extraordinary vocation, great labours, and many miracles, we have from Luke, whose authority is indisputable; and the high and deserved regard, which has always been paid him by the wisest and greatest of men, is not to be shook at this distance of time by bare assertions and groundless surmises

mises . . . Nor is it true, that *these additions* made by St. Paul and the other apostles, *make any change in the covenant*. They are no way repugnant to any part of this made known before. The covenant was not perfected without them. They are supposed to come from the same authority from which the terms of it before revealed came ; and therefore rightly claim the same attention and belief.

I cannot tell what passage our noble writer had in his eye, when he affirmed, that *Paul in effect says of himself*, that he was *the author of a new Gospel*. * Nor can I reconcile this with what his Lordship allowed, that his Gospel was fundamentally the same with the other apostles.

Want of order and perspicuity are next objected to him ; which complaint has been by those, who have been most conversant in his writings, thought more owing to the carelessness

* If it be thought, that the texts alluded to are Rom. ii. 16. xvi. 25. 2 Tim. ii. 8. in all which the phrase *according to my Gospel* is used ; we may ask, how does this phrase denote a *new Gospel* ? In all these places this is evidently applied to such doctrines as are common to all the Gospels, viz. to the resurrection of Christ, and his coming to judgment, and the Divine power of establishing Christians in the faith. And throughout all his Epistles, St. Paul so uniformly represents his doctrine, and that of the other apostles, as the same, that one can hardly suppose these texts to be the only foundation of so flatly contradicting and misrepresenting him. And yet we may deny the greatest of Lord Bolingbroke's admirers to produce any others or better.

carelessness and inattention of his readers. No one however can say, that so much as the appearance of that want is general. The main of his writings are clear and beautiful, as well as useful; and if any part be otherwise, it only proves, that the guidance under which he wrote extended not to his stile, but merely to his sentiments.

No, *his Gospel is often absurd, profane, or trifling.* How is this, when it is granted, that he *does not prescribe any thing directly opposite to the law of nature, as the command of God to man.* What room then for any absurdity or profaneness? Does not that concession imply that no false article is delivered as from God . . . But instances are given. *Passive obedience, and absolute predestination.* But we should be very sure, that these doctrines, in their ill sense, were taught by him; or else it will be very unfair to impute to him all the errors and wrong conclusions, which have been grounded on his writings. Predestination is, I think, represented by St Paul, as relating to privileges of nations in this world, not rewards of particular persons in the next; or when to the latter, as depending on the Divine foreknowledge of their behaviour. In these lights it may well be admitted: at least, it doth not include absolute unconditional reprobation; which doctrine is far from being *held in general to be orthodox.* In short, Lord Bolingbroke well knew, that Mr. Locke and others had done justice to St. Paul in this particular, by explaining his meaning at large. But though he could not disprove
what

what they had said, he was not in the least inclined to let go so favourite a topic of accusation.

As to the other article, St. Paul does indeed insist upon subjection to the higher powers, and denounces damnation to those who resist them. And from hence many wild and unwarrantable notions have been raised, for which he is no way answerable. He may be supposed to have laid down a general rule of very great consequence, without putting cases, and making exceptions; which reason and nature will never fail to provide for, whenever they happen, and which it may be of no good service to communities to point out particularly beforehand. And he prescribes obedience to the powers that be, to the Supreme power of every nation, without determining in whose hands this should be lodged. And without obedience of this kind, it is difficult to say what government can subsist. Observe farther, that the principles, which the apostle of the Gentiles builds this duty upon, are in a great measure granted by his Lordship. Vol. IV. p. 62, 63, he says, *governments are instituted by virtue of the law of our nature, and are in this sense of Divine appointment There must be an absolute power in every civil society placed somewhere.*

The other exception against St. Paul is taken from what he says about the woman's praying with her head covered; which is represented as trifling. But surely, if at this time of day we cannot give a clear and perfect account of this reasoning, we might consider this as a matter of very little moment:

ment : Our inability will not affect the apostle's character, or lessen the authority and usefulness of his writings. If we will measure all ancient works by modern standards, and make no allowance for the different customs which prevail in different times and places ; there is hardly any old writer, nay any modern one far removed from us, which will not, in some particular or other, equally lie under the charge of trifling. St. Paul's Epistles, though designed for the use of the church in all ages, were immediately wrote for those to whom they were sent. And inspiration, though it will always guard against error, may frequently leave the genius at liberty to give directions of smaller, as well as greater moment ; and to enforce them in such manner, as any present circumstances require. We must then expect that such person will of course write according to the habits and manners of the age. Let us then take these particulars along with us ; that among those to whom St. Paul wrote, things were different from what they are now ; bare heads were looked upon as a sign of dominion ; and it was a disgrace for women to be shaven and to appear without a veil ; and we shall have a better opinion of this direction, that men should pray or prophecy with their heads uncovered, but women the contrary, in token of their subjection. The apostle is arguing from what was then esteemed decent or comely, which they, to whom he wrote, were judges of ; and in points naturally indifferent, custom and general opinion is the rule to judge by. Nor was it at all need-

less or trifling to give orders of this nature : Minute as they may appear to us, they might be highly proper to prevent offences among Christians, or unjust prejudices against the church, then in her infancy. And the early character which St. Paul's writings obtained shews this to have been the case, and the sense of wise and good men then.

2. Let us next consider, what Lord Bolingbroke says on the subject of the Trinity. We have seen him owning, repeatedly owning, the Divinity of the Son. He rightly observes, that *Sabellianism gave occasion to Arianism* ; men imprudently running into one extreme to avoid another. And it would be very difficult to give an account of the rise of Sabellianism, if the doctrine of the Trinity was not then esteemed to be the doctrine of Scripture. Men would never have thought of confounding the Divine Persons, if these had not been believed to be equal in nature . . . If this noble writer was in earnest when he made the above concessions, the objections against this doctrine as *polytheistical*, and all his misrepresentations of it, must come from him with a very ill grace. Orthodox persons believe the Unity of God as firmly as possible ; tho' they humbly and modestly decline explaining the manner how the Blessed Three are One God ; as knowing this point to be absolutely and necessarily incomprehensible. But to allow the Son to be God as well as the Father, and yet to charge this doctrine as teaching two Gods, both which his Lordship doth, is entirely inconsistent with any belief of the
Divine

Divine Unity. Since *the admission of two or two hundred is equally polytheistical.*

Two consubstantial persons, his Lordship says, *cannot be intelligibly distinguished from one another.* If he means, that our understanding is not equal to this mystery, and that the manner of this distinction cannot be perfectly explained to us, he is right; but this should be no objection, as we find him allowing mysteries. But if he means, that the reality of this distinction cannot be made known to us, the assertion is false and presuming. A distinction between the Father and the Son, corresponding to these two words, is plainly revealed in Scripture. He has owned them both to be God: And this is all we understand by the word consubstantial.

Who now says, *the same person intercedes with himself?* This is no part of the orthodox scheme, nor is it held, that I know of, by any Christian.

As to the truth and antiquity of the doctrine of the Trinity, this has been discussed at large; and cannot be overthrown by positive assertions; and nothing more is here advanced.

A solemn confutation of that wild and palpably absurd supposition, concerning the number of persons composing the Nicene council, would be little less than ridiculous. An Arabick MS is here preferred, against all probability and common sense, to all the authentic accounts of cotemporary writers, who were a part of this council themselves. This MS is left by Eutychius, who lived in the ninth century, and on which Mr. Selden wrote a commentary: But this

learned author himself observes, that it does not appear from whence Eutychius had this account. He indeed mentions two other assertors of the same, one Josephus, an Egyptian Presbyter, who wrote in Arabic (according to Selden A. D. 1400) and a Mahometan writer; neither of whom are published, nor is the age of the last mentioned by Selden. Com. in Eutych. Orig. No. 16.*

3. *If Christ taught the duties of natural religion with evangelical simplicity; if he was the greatest of preachers; if his decision about divorces had a right to be more respected than the natural and Mosaical law among Christians, all which is granted; then the following assertions must undeniably be false, that a better system of ethics is to be had from the heathen moralists, than from the Gospels . . . that the sublime and peculiarly Christian precepts are little consistent with the law of nature . . . that some duties enjoined in the sermon on the mount are by no means practicable in the general society of mankind † . . . that, to talk of imitating*

* See Cave, who says, that in Eutychius's Annals, certe plurima anilibus fabulis simillima, quæ si non ex proprio cerebello finxerit, saltem ex futilibus Ecclesiæ suæ monumentis hausit Hist. Literar.

† The chief duties here meant are those mentioned Matth. v. 39, 40, 41. where our Lord, to keep his disciples as far as possible from the principles and practices of retaliation and revenge, which had prevailed among the Jews, enjoins them rather to bear some supportable

*tating God, which Christ certainly enjoined, and which is owned to be among the most refined precepts of Christian morality, is theological familiarity . . . that one man, Vol. IV. p. 109. may have several wives . . . that without divorces, which should be granted for ill management or ill humour, monogamy is an absurd unnatural, and cruel imposition . . . that incestuous marriages are not contrary to the law of nature, not even those between parents and children directly prohibited thereby, but others have a sanction from thence.**
 The contradictions here cannot but be seen

portable losses, and to put up some slight injuries, nay to venture the repetition of such, than either privately to punish them, or to be rigorous in taking every advantage of prosecuting them in a legal manner. And surely equity and patience, forgiveness, and even prudence itself, will not only justify, but strongly recommend, such precepts. Neither are they impracticable, nor inconsistent with society, or the defending any rights of importance. See Grotius on the place.

* If it be said, that at the beginning the children of Adam must be supposed to have been joined together, there being no other way of peopling the world: we may answer, that what happened then through mere necessity can give no sanction to such practices now; which are not only void of any such pretence, but highly unsuitable to the present condition of men, as multiplied on the earth; and therefore most contrary to the law of nature and reason . . . Nor will this excuse at all extend to the case of parents and children . . . But, I hope, bad as the world is, there is no need of convincing them of the iniquity and unnaturalness of incest.

seen by every one. And the looseness of the casuistry, which appears in these latter passages must strike every sober mind with astonishment and abhorrence, and inspire him with an high regard for the opposite and pure morals of the Gospels. I shall only add one remark on what is said about a *well ordered polygamy*. It has been disputed whether this causes a prodigious increase of people. The contrary has been, I think, shewn; and the near equality between the number of males and females, which I believe prevails every where, seems to decide the point. But if we grant this, how will it *provide the most effectual means for the education of children*? Will it not be a means of dividing the man's affections, and lessening his substance? And is not *the united care of both parents in breeding up subjects of the commonwealth*, which is owned to be the *effect of monogamy*, a most considerable advantage towards their right education?

4. How could Lord Bolingbroke, who allowed the Divine Mission, Messiahship, and miracles of Christ, allow himself to say, that *the entire plan of Divine wisdom in the Mission of Christ, and the redemption of man, is not to be reduced to a coherent, intelligible, and reasonable system of doctrines and facts*? Why would he thus inconsistently throw down with the one hand, what he had so well built up with the other? No credit surely can be given to such a general and crude reflection, in opposition to what his better judgment taught him. Nor doth it require any other than this general answer, that Divine Wisdom must appear in what
 God

God has done and confirmed both by prophecies and miracles. And the incoherency is not in the entire plan of this, but in the plan of these philosophical essays.

5. It may be thought a point of no great consequence to dispute, from whence *the heathens took their notions of mediation and intercession, of atonement and expiation. From the characters of men and governments*, says his Lordship. But how does the whole of this appear? That bloody sacrifices were used and rested in by them, cannot be doubted. But what governments ever appointed these to expiate any rebellion or other crimes committed against themselves? The offender in these cases was doomed to die. And if he was pardoned though it might sometimes be on account of some powerful intercession made for him; yet what instance is there of his being required, in order to his pardon, to sacrifice some beast in his stead, as was continually done, in order to appease the divine anger, or to procure some favour from heaven? in short, these notions and customs could not proceed from any practices of civil communities; but they have their original in a consciousness of guilt, a just sense of the connection between guilt and punishment, and a desire to escape punishment by means, which universal tradition had taught them. Indeed our noble author says, that *neither reason nor experience will lead us to enquire what propitiation God will accept.* But this is contrary to all reason and experience too. A desire of pardon must be natural: a solicitude to know on what terms this will be vouchsafed, is

equally so : An assurance, that we shall be pardoned without any propitiation, is more than sinners can receive, and more than ever was entertained. Accordingly all nations of the world have been concerned about this matter, and have had recourse to some expiation.

6. We are told farther, that *our ideas of moral attributes, will lead us to think, that God would have been satisfied, more agreeably to his mercy and goodness, without any expiation, upon the repentance of the offenders, and more agreeably to his justice, with any other expiation rather than that of his Son.* I am glad to find the moral attributes argued from, (tho' with an ill grace by a writer who elsewhere rejects this sort of argument) and shall take the same liberty of arguing from them, in my turn ; only let us not divide them. Let us consider, not what is agreeable to God's goodness, and to his justice, separately, but what is agreeable to them both. Is it then most agreeable to Divine mercy and justice, I may add, to Divine wisdom and truth, to pardon with or without expiation ? Which of these different proceedings best secures the laws and authority of God from violation and contempt ? Which is most suitable to the high character of moral Governor of the world ? Which most comforts the penitent, and encourages him to future duty ? That, which does all this, is not only most just, but most merciful and good. And surely, a sufficient expiation has in these respects an high advantage over bare repentance, such imperfect repentance as ours especially : And express promises grounded upon

upon an expiation, the only promises of pardon which God ever made, must give much greater comfort, than the slender hopes which nature could afford, and which may be supposed to be ballanced by at least equal fears. Thus the Divine attributes are best reconciled, and the reasons and wishes of the offender satisfied.

7. Let us next enquire, whether any other expiation be more agreeable to God's justice and goodness than that of his Son. In affirming this we may easily mistake; and it will become us to be contented with, and thankful for, the favours we have received, without objecting against the manner in which they are conferred. That the person who makes this expiation, does it voluntarily; that he be innocent; dear to God; and that the sacrifice be meritorious in his sight; all this is necessary, and it is sufficient to qualify him for this office, and to display God's justice and goodness. The more excellent and exalted the person is, the better the reverence of God's laws is secured; the more fully is hatred against sin shewn; and the more conspicuously is his love and good will to us manifested. And can we then conceive any expiation equal to that of the Son of God, or object to it as disagreeable to these attributes?

But the *notion of fitness*, and his *innocency and death*, are said to be *irreconcilable*. This would be the case, if death was inflicted as a punishment on him, or if he had not consented to it. But if he consented to bear the sins of the world, the fitness of this dispensation can *puzzle no casuist* whatever.

Nothing indeed, in the reason of the thing, could lead any one to imagine the doctrine of propitiation by the Son of God. Much less has superstition or prejudice here any place. So far we readily agree. But as to the rigor and exaction of one God, and the humility and condescension of the other, as our author chuses to express himself; what he says of the former is a gross misrepresentation of goodness connected with justice and wisdom: And the other is indeed love incomprehensible, but truly adorable. The account above will shew the reasons, why some Redeemer was needful and accepted.

I profess myself utterly unable to consider the last extract under this head without terror. Here the death of Christ for man, which is the doctrine of Christ himself in the gospel, is set forth as *partiality, injustice and cruelty*. These are hard words to be used against a scheme proved by the clearest miracles: But they are words only: There is no sort of argument to support them. This love is said to *appear partiality as great, as that which the Jews assumed, that God had shewn in preferring their nation to all the nations of the earth*. But how are these things parallel? Is Christ supposed to have died for one nation only? or for the faithful and penitent in all? Partiality to these sure is just and right: And no other can I find in the Gospel scheme.

Indeed, his Lordship seems to think, that *the Messiah intended to reform and graft upon Judaism; that the mystery of calling the Gentiles is inconsistent with his declarations and practice; that when he commanded his disci-*
 ciples

ciples to teach *all nations*, he means only the *Jews dispersed in all nations* . . . But this is all *gratis dictum*. The nature of the gospel revelation contradicts it: This was designed for universal benefit: Several speeches of Christ contradict it; as, "other sheep I have, which are not of this fold," &c. The history of the acts, and the practice of the Apostles, contradict it. And surely all these deserve more credit, than an affirmation grounded on nothing more, than Christ's preaching in his own person to the Jews only, and making the first offers to this people. This partiality then is only supposed. The love of God in sending his Son is truly universal.

Neither is there any *injustice in the circumstances of the fall*, nor in the *redemption of man by the sacrifice of an innocent person*. These things have been already considered. I will only add, that if our Redeemer had not been innocent, he could not have made a sufficient propitiation for us.

But we are told *this goodness will appear cruelty*, in that the propitiation was made by *tormenting and spilling the blood of the victim*. All propitiations have been made so: Whether any could have been made otherwise, we cannot presume to say, and are no proper judges. However, this is no more cruelty than injustice; as our Lord freely consented, and ever blessed be his name for consenting, to undergo this torment and death: Which might be intended, not only to set forth the greatness of his love and condescension to us; but to convince us of the heinousness of our guilt, of the punishment we had

had incurred, and of the punishment which we still deserve, if we continue therein.

Next, we have a complicated charge of *inconsistence, injustice, and cruelty*; but formed on the weakest foundation, viz. the *Jews being rejected for crucifying the Messiah, without which men could not have been redeemed*. Now, we cannot in common modesty say, that infinite wisdom could not easily have found out other means of offering the atonement, than by the instrumentality of the Jews. However, all that can be collected from hence, is, that God makes use of wicked men to accomplish his own great and good designs, and yet punishes them for their wickedness. We have all reason to think he does the same in many other instances; whether by any other means than foreknowledge and permission, I presume not to say. But however inscrutable any parts of his moral government may be, without doubt, "he is righteous in all his ways, and " holy in all his works."

8. I need not answer the noble author's strange account of the conduct of Ananias and Sapphira, and the judgment inflicted on them by the hands of St. Peter.* This awful circumstance

* To prevent the reader's trouble in turning to the place, I shall here set down the words. "Ananias with Sapphira his wife sold a possession, and kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the Apostles feet;" pretending it was the whole. Part of St. Peter's exhortation was, "whilst it remained " was it not thine own? And after it was sold, " was

circumstance should methinks have prevented the wantonness of his Lordship's pen. But the history is in every one's hands : We may trust the meanest reader with this gross abuse and misrepresentation of it : No one can be imposed upon by it, unless wilfully.

9. There remains now only one particular under this head to speak to ; but this a particular of great consequence indeed : It is levelled against Christ's resurrection and ascension. Now, as his mission and the Gospels are true, and they are allowed by his Lordship to be true, these prime articles are uncontestable. But *both these events* are said to have *passed in a very private manner*. *There were few witnesses* of the latter. The eleven disciples at least were witnesses of it, according to all the accounts we have. And sure these are a sufficient number to attest so open

“ was it not in thine own power ? ” This shews, that his dedication of his substance was entirely voluntary, and that he might, if he had pleased, have innocently kept the whole. But by giving only a part, and asserting it to be the whole, he was not only guilty of a solemn lie, and an attempt to mock God, but a direct and intended fraud. For a competent and proportionable distribution of the whole money contributed was made by the Apostles. He therefore by having pretended to give the whole, would expect to live upon the common dividend ; and, considering what he had reserved, might have been unjustly a gainer by his seeming bounty . . . This is the true account : And I must leave it now to the reader to consider, how very unfair and profane a turn his Lordship has given to this passage.

open a fact. But *there were no witnesses, properly speaking of his resurrection.* Yes, the watch were so : As indeed were all that saw him after he was risen. For nothing can be clearer, than that the event here proves the miracle. Every one, who saw him dead, and afterwards alive, were as properly witnesses of his being risen, had as good satisfaction of the truth of this fact, and were as capable of declaring it to others, as if they had seen him in the very article of rising . . . Well, but the persons *said to have seen him* were but *few*. This is plainly contradicting the Scripture without any reason. The Gospels represent the women and the eleven Apostles, and Cleophas with the other who went to Emmaus, as having received this favour. And St. Paul mentions himself and above five hundred brethren, who at once had seen him. This the noble Lord knew ; and therefore, to get rid of this testimony, he says, *St. Paul deserves no credit, affirming this against the whole tenor of the gospels.* But do the gospels say one word to deny this fact ? Do they say, that the Apostles *only* and a few women saw him ? No, they are silent as to this circumstance. St. Paul, who equally proved his commission by miracles, and whose epistles are equally parts of the canon with the gospels, adds this part of the history for our stronger confirmation. And can this with the least propriety, be said to contradict their relations, or to be against the whole tenor of them ? Does St. John contradict St. Matthew, by giving an account of some appearances of Christ, which this evangelist had omitted ? One is
 ashamed

ashamed to answer such mere cavils
 Lastly, *Christ scarce shewed himself in
 such a manner as they could know by it, cer-
 tainly, that it was he whom they had seen.*
 However cautiously this be worded, it is
 most untrue, and flatly contrary to what the
 gospels teach. If appearing frequently to
 the persons, who of all others knew him
 best, conversing with them, eating and drink-
 ing before them, suffering them to handle
 him, and one of them, more incredulous
 than the rest, to feel the print of the wounds
 he had received at his crucifixion ; if all this
 would not give certain information of the
 reality and identity of his person ; it will be
 impossible to say, how sufficient satisfaction
 could in a such a case be had.

THUS feeble in all its parts is our noble
 writer's attack against this fundamental truth,
 this corner stone, of our religion. Let us
 proceed to what he says of *the truth, perfec-
 tion, and usefulness of Christianity.* The sum
 of his concessions collected under the twelfth
 head is as follows. *Genuine Christianity is
 contained in the gospels, and is the word of
 God . . . it is a perfect dispensation . . . stands
 examinations has all the proofs it can
 have . . . was established by miracles and suf-
 ferings . . . spread beyond the bounds of the
 Roman empire in three centuries . . . is in
 every point conformable to the law of nature
 . . . is a continued lesson of the strictest mora-
 lity . . . supplied all that was wanting in the
 philosophers . . . contributed to destroy poly-
 theism and idolatry . . . most tends to promote
 the peace and happiness of mankind . . . makes
 the law of right reason strictly a law . . . is
 a compleat system to all the purposes of reli-
 gion*

gion . . . is supported by sanctions of future rewards and punishments.

All these encomiums are strictly true ; and surely they should make us, as lovers of truth, of private and of social good, gladly and stedfastly hold fast our Christian profession, without being shaken by any objections, which can be raised against it ; remembering that nothing is so true, or so perfect, as to have escaped clear of all difficulties and objections.

Let us now hear what is advanced by the same person on the other side.

Vol. II. Revelation has had no better success than p. 235. reason.

p. 259. When we consider the great and glorious purposes of this revelation . . . we are ready to conclude, that such a revelation must have left reason nothing to do, must have forced conviction, and have taken away even the possibility of doubt.

p. 270. If we had all the original proofs for and against our religion, though proofs would have been more abundant, the evidence would have been greater, and we should be puzzled as much by contradictory, as we are by scanty, proofs.

p. 275. Divines are accused of madness for endeavouring to shew the reasons and the connection of the Divine dispensations.

p. 304. The apostles, saints, and doctors of Christianity have not had the power to reform the world.

Vol. III. Such a motley crowd of Jews and heathens as the first converts to Christianity were, could not fail to mix a leaven of judaic and heathen theology into the Christian system.

P. 32. No monuments can be more uncertain, than those of Christian tradition.

These

These never more so than at first. p. 33.

Ecclesiastical tradition has been, from the first and purest ages, founded for the most part, in ignorance, superstition, enthusiasm, and fraud. p. 39.

The scene of Christianity has been always a scene of dissension, of hatred, of persecution, and of blood. p. 174.

The proof of Christianity by miracles began in a very little time, traditional and historical : and one might be allowed to wonder how the effect of it continued, and increased too, as the force of it diminished. Vol. IV. p. 23.

That the Christian law is nothing else than the law of nature, enforced by a new revelation, every friend to Christianity admits. p. 26.

The Christian revelation has not effectually reformed the world. See the pages before and after, where it is contended, that the world has not been bettered by it. p. 240.

They, to whom the terms of the Christian religion were communicated, might say, with sound reason and the unprejudiced light of nature on their side, that these terms would have been communicated to all mankind alike, if the revelation had been from God ; since all mankind were alike obliged to them, and since they to whom these terms had not been communicated, would die, and might be damned, in their involuntary ignorance of them. p. 278.

Though our religion forbids pride, and teaches humility, yet the whole system of it tends to inspire the former into all those, who are not able to discern the consistency of particular precepts and of the system, which I presume that very few are . . . The proofs p. 342.

proofs of this are, our being said to be made in the image of God, the final cause of the creation, and redeemed by his son.

Vol. V. The christian notion of rewards and punishments represented, as if there will be no proportion observed between the various degrees of merit and demerit.

p. 130. Christianity preserved in many respects a strong tang of the spirit of Judaism.

HOW very different is this representation of our religion from the former ? That contained many just and excellent things in its praise : the whole design of this is to dishonor and disgrace it, But in vain are all such attempts, though made by the greatest geniuses in the world.

I. We cannot believe, that *revelation has had no better success than reason had ; that the world has not been bettered by Christianity ;* having been told by his Lordship, that *our Saviour found the whole world in a state of error, concerning the first principle of natural religion ; and that the spreading of Christianity has contributed to destroy polytheism and idolatry.* This, we know, unassisted reason could not do. This I hope, is in a great measure, reforming and bettering the world. Much has indeed been done towards mending it, by Christianity. And if more has not been effectually, still this is the fault of men, who may despise or neglect the best rules of life and manners, and who cannot be forced into virtue and obedience ; but it should never be objected as a reproach to our religion, which contains every help and advantage to this purpose, that any institution can possibly have. Look back to the
 commen-

commendations, the high commendations, of its excellency and usefulness, which we before extracted from the noble author, and we shall want no farther proof of this matter.

2. Indeed, in one place, we find his Lordship asserting, that *the whole system of our religion tends to inspire pride*, which must be owned to be a great root of evil, and fountain of mischief, *into the greatest part of Christians*. But the instances brought in proof of this are not sufficient to justify the assertion. It is no pride to acknowledge the real dignity of our nature, and the great blessings we have received from heaven. The consideration of our reason and liberty, of our being the principal creature in this lower world, profited and served by every thing round us, and much more, of our having been wonderfully redeemed from the power and guilt and punishment of our sins by the condescension of the Son of God, must call forth our gratitude ; and gratitude, especially such as binds us to acknowledge perpetually, that our deliverance from misery, our power of acting right, our hope of future happiness, are owing to the atonement, the grace, the mediation of Another will ever be attended with humility. So that there is no sort of difficulty in *discerning the consistency of particular precepts, and the whole system*. Both look one way : Every part of the law of nature is here inculcated and enforced. And the additional institutions and doctrines (for surely no friend to Christianity does or can admit the Christian law to be *nothing else than the law of nature enforced*

inforced by revelation) contained in the Gospels, directly tend to promote both public and private happiness.

3. The vices of the world, under such an admirable dispensation, are then a disgrace to the persons guilty of them, and much to be lamented. However, Lord Bolingbroke appears to have aggravated the matter much, when he says *the scene of Christianity has been always a scene of dissension, hatred, of persecution, and of blood*. He cannot say, consistently with his own declarations, that these evils are ever chargeable on Christianity, which in the strictest manner forbids them. And some centuries past, before any other warmth, than that of a harmless and laudable zeal for the truths of their religion, was found among Christians. In the early times, these were indeed exposed to hatred and persecution from their heathen enemies, on account of their religion: but they were generally at union among themselves. And in every age, the good influence of Christianity, especially where it is professed in its purity, has appeared in the behaviour of very many; and the noblest fruits of concord, benevolence, and love, have sprung from this sound and happy root, far exceeding and overballancing the instances of dissension, &c.

4. The speedy propagation, and amazing success, of our religion, in the three first centuries, is acknowledged by his Lordship; who also owns, that the first preachers of it *established it by their miracles and sufferings*. And indeed by no other means was this possible to be done. Yet this does not seem to have satisfied him. He thinks, that all the circum-

circumstances of this revelation considered, it *must have forced conviction, and have taken away even the possibility of doubt.* Something like this was alledged against the the account of the miracles of Moses, and the frequent defections of the Israelites. What was said in answer to that plea, is applicable here. Conviction is not to be forced from beings created free. In matters of religion, prejudices and passions operate more strongly, than they do in common subjects. Here it is but too usual to withstand the force both of reason and evidence. This was peculiarly visible in our Saviour's time: And therefore the unbelief and opposition of the generality then, ought not to throw the least suspicion on the accounts of the Gospels, any more than the unbelief of vain and wicked men can now, on the truth of Christianity.

5. After we have seen Lord Bolingbroke owning the Christian religion to have been established by miracles, to be able to stand examination, to have been taught by God, to have all the proofs it could have; is it not surprizing to find him saying, that *we are now puzzled by scanty proofs*; and insinuating, that there were some original proofs against it, which are lost, and which would *contradict* what we have for it? How was it possible for him to know this last particuiar? There are no accounts of any thing of this sort recorded; and the very success of the Gospel disproves it. For if the facts on which it stands, could have been early contradicted, it must have been quashed at once.

6. But

6. But though *the proof by miracles was, no doubt, sufficient for the conversion of those who saw them*; yet we are told, *it became in a very little time traditional and historical; the force of it diminished; no monuments can be more uncertain than those of Christian tradition; these never more so than at first; ecclesiastical tradition has been from the first and purest ages founded for the most part, in ignorance, superstition, enthusiasm and fraud.* These are very severe words: And if they are true, we can have no dependance on the proof of Christianity; nor had the first Christians, who were not eye witnesses of the miracles and hearers of those who worked them, any that is sure and certain. And how then can Christianity *require our veneration and strict conformity*, as his Lordship allows it does?

I have spoken before about the diminishing of traditionary proof; and have now only to add a word or two in vindication of the written traditions of ecclesiastical writers, concerning the books of Scripture, and the original miracles. They are very far from deserving the dreadful character, which his Lordship has thought proper, but without any proof, to bestow upon them. They are handed down from time to time by the most considerable Christians in their respective ages, who had all assurances of the truth and many of whom sealed their veracity by martyrdom. They were received by the whole body of Christians, and uncontradicted by heathens. Nor will a few mistakes in other matters destroy their evidence.

7. That

7. That all the Divine dispensations are quite reasonable and connected, must in general be affirmed. Reason, the law, and the Gospel, we have cause, with his Lordship's allowance, to think Divine dispensations. Where the uses, intents, and harmony of these can be made appear ; as indeed they may be made appear plainly in many particulars, this is a point, which it is very suitable to the profession of the clergy, and very much to the credit of the religion they teach, to endeavour to shew and explain. And if at any time they should fail in any part of this attempt, I must humbly presume, that such endeavour is quite laudable in them ; and that they ought not to be *accused*, much less in general to be *accused of madness* on this account.

8. Some misrepresentations of our religion occur next to our notice. *The first converts* to it, being *Jews and Heathens*, must have *mixed it with Judaic and heathen theology*. But, as this must have been in the times of the apostles and first preachers of the gospel ; these, it may be supposed, had both power and will to preserve it free from all material errors. It is from their writings, that we form our judgment of genuine Christianity : and therefore, whatever the private notions of any of their disciples might have been, we have sufficient means to discover them, and guard against them. *Christianity* is said to have *preserved in many respects, a strong tang of the spirit of Judaism*. If we except the oddness of the expression, we may admit the remark. Many particulars are similar in these two dispensations. Nay, they

they may justly be thought one and the same holy dispensation, gradually revealed ; first imperfectly in types and figures, and now fully compleated and manifested. This is the light, in which the apostle to the Gentiles himself considers them . . . But surely it cannot be said that Christianity hath any taint of partiality or ill temper. And if this be what his Lordship meant, his observation is most untrue, and inconsistent with what he has elsewhere allowed.

'The noble Lord entirely mistakes *the Christian notion of rewards and punishments*, when he represents it, as observing no proportion between the various degrees of merit and demerit. The gospels very sufficiently obviate any such pretence. With regard to rewards, the parable of the talents is full, clear, and decisive. And as to future punishments, we need only appeal to those places where mention is made of "receiving greater damnation," and of being "beaten with many, and with few, stripes." So that there will be a proportion, and this strictly just and answerable to our different conduct.

9. The objection against the Christian religion, from its not having been communicated to all mankind, has been frequently considered with great accuracy, and answered to the fullest satisfaction. I shall not repeat here the substance of what has been urged. But as Lord Bolingbroke has revived the difficulty, let us confine ourselves to consider the reasons he has been pleased to produce. These are, that *all mankind were alike obliged to the terms of the Christian religion ; and that they, to whom these had not been communicated,*

nicated, would dye, and might be damned, in their involuntary ignorance of them. I must suppose his meaning to have been, for not observing the terms which they were obliged to observe, though they could not discover them. And indeed this supposition is a strong imputation on the goodness of God : And they, who hold it, will find it impossible to clear the Christian scheme from the objection rising from the want of universality. But then this is no doctrine of the gospel ; which never teaches, that men are obliged to what they do not know, or will be punished for what they cannot help ; and which gives us very different notions both of the justice and mercy of God's dealings with mankind. Here then we see an arbitrary hypothesis set up, and built upon, as if it had been entirely received and maintained. And therefore *sound reason, and the unprejudiced light of nature,* could not reject our religion, because it was not communicated to all alike. The same is the case of almost all God's other gifts. We are not here favoured all alike : Nor shall be hereafter judged by the same rule, nor rewarded or punished all alike.

Observe farther, that this objection, if it had any weight, does not affect us only in these latter ages, but would have had equal weight at the beginning of the gospel ; and might have been with the same force proposed even by those, who were eye witnesses of miracles. Little then might we expect it from this noble author, who had owned these *sufficient to the conversion of all those who saw them.* If this be true, the

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objection

objection can have no strength. Miracles cannot take place, where there is a prior proof of falsehood. Where then miracles were sufficient to convince, there could be no such proof : And if there was not then, there cannot be now.

UNDER the thirteenth head are comprized three or more articles, *Grace, Mysteries, Sacraments, &c.* Of grace he yields, that *without an assistance unknown to reason*, i. e. superior to reason, what this could not teach or assure us of, *it is impossible to extinguish lust* ; that he *does not mean to exclude the influence of grace in making converts*, though he has no conception of it, i. e. as we must understand him, of the manner how this operates ; that the *doctrine of co-operating with God*, and the way of salvation being open to all who did so, appears moderate, reasonable, and no way repugnant to the ideas of Divine justice and goodness ; and that thus to co-operate is honour enough for the creature . . . All this is right ; and is, I trust, an effectual answer to the following passages, which are of another tendency.

Vol. I. A religious education, a warm head, and
p. 176. a warmer heart, hope, fear, grief, joy, strong
passions turned by prejudice and habit to
devotion, devotion itself nursing its own
principles, the effect in its turn becoming a
cause uniform and constant, or redoubling
its force, on the least failure, in acts of
attrition, contrition, mortification and re-
pentance . . . these represented as the causes
of what is usually supposed God's grace, as
sufficient to produce all the behaviour of
Saints, confessors, or martyrs.

A mystery

A mystery, i. e. a thing unknown. p. 340.

A mystery is something unintelligible, or Vol. II.
any thing more than the sound of words. p. 282.

The sacraments soon perverted by the p. 314.
fathers, who imitated the heathen mysteries.

New thoughts and dispositions given to the Vol. V.
mind, and in consequence, new determina- p. 29.
tions to the will, must alter the ordinary and
natural progression of human understanding,
and resume our freedom of will.

If some men were determined to goodness p. 43.
by the silent workings of the spirit, and others
not, which they must be on the supposition
of particular providences

The trite ceremony of baptism is made so p. 198.
essential a part of religion under the vague
name of a Sacrament, &c.

1. THE reader cannot fail to observe,
that the assistance owned, in the first extracts,
to be *unknown to reason*, and necessary to *con-
quer lust*, is in these last totally resolved into
natural causes, strong enough to produce the
very highest and hardest instances of duty.
A good education is indeed the way to
strengthen the good dispositions of the mind.
Habits of devotion are means of drawing
down the Divine assistance, as well as of co-
operating with it, and increasing it. The
power and efficacy of these means are un-
doubted. The different success of religious
and irreligious persons, in the matter of self
reformation, shews this fully. Hence we
have great cause to use these means, and great
reason to be thankful to God for prescribing
them in his holy word . . . But can any
one of himself know, whether these means
operate altogether naturally, or partly by the

bleſſing and grace of God ſuperadded to them? We are capable of being influenced by our fellow creatures, even when we do not perceive it : Are we not much more by the Father of Spirits ? Why then ſhould we not believe the Scripture, when it tells us, that without his grace we can do nothing ? Sinners can have no excuſe from hence, who may obtain this, if they will duly apply for it.

But ſetting aſide the ſuppoſition of Divine grace, all the means mentioned by his Lordſhip, and indeed all we can uſe, will little avail againſt the frailty of human nature ; nor indeed could they be expected to riſe themſelves to any conſiderable height.

2. According to the other poſitions above, relating to the Divine influences, I may aſk what room is there to talk of our *co-operating with God*, which is before allowed to be reaſonable? Of *particular providences* enough has been ſaid already. A conſequence of our belief of theſe is an expectation of particular grace and help in time of need and temptation, and in answer to our prayers. There is nothing abſurd in ſuppoſing, on the authority of Scripture, *the ſilent workings of the Spirit in our ſouls*. The manner of this we are indeed ignorant of. But it would be preſumptuous to ſuppoſe, that when God gave us our reaſon and liberty, he precluded himſelf from aſſiſting and ſtrengthening either of theſe faculties ever after ; or from giving the mind new light, or new thoughts and diſpoſitions, whenever he ſhould pleaſe. And when we feel ourſelves frail and weak, and are aſſured of help from above, it is moſt ungrateful to reject ſuch aſſurances, and to reſuſe

refuse such offers. We have no reason to think, that ordinarily, the spirit of God determines bad men irresistibly to goodness. In such case our freewill might in part be resumed. But this is not what the Scripture teaches us: And Scripture is answerable for no misrepresentations or errors of men.

3. The *two Sacraments* Lord Bolingbroke owns to be *certainly Divine ceremonies*; to be *profitable ceremonies*; the institution of the Lord's supper to be *most intelligible and reasonable* . . . And yet he says, *the sacraments were soon perverted by the fathers, who imitated the heathen mysteries* . . . He speaks of the *trite ceremony of baptism* . . . as being made *so essential a part of religion under the vague name of a sacrament* . . . And is not a *Divine ceremony*, therefore really an *essential part of religion*, to those who are apprized of its appointment? Baptism was indeed used before in other religions, and adopted by our Saviour. And possibly this might be what his Lordship meant by calling it a *trite ceremony*. But is it therefore less respectable, or to be slighted or neglected, when so expressly enjoined in a religion which came from God? No surely. As to the fathers, I have not time at present to vindicate them from a general accusation. But I must observe, that according to his Lordship's account of the heathen mysteries, the imitating these could be no great offence. For he says, Vol. I. p. 354. *that by these, lessons of morality were frequently renewed, habits of piety were solemnly maintained; and to enforce them all, that great sanction, which consists in the rewards and punishments of another life . . . was inculcated*

so, that every man must apply it to himself, and the impression be lasting . . . Well then, if the fathers applied the sacraments to such good purposes, forgive them this wrong. If this was a perversion, it was, we see, a profitable and a laudable one. Not but, the sacraments were in their own nature adapted, and much more than any heathen mysteries were, to answer these, and other excellent ends.

4. Our noble writer owns *many incomprehensible doctrines in the gospel*; that a revealed truth's being mysterious is *no objection to the belief* of it; that *there is, and needs must be, something marvellous in revelation*; that *human nature cannot penetrate the secrets of the divine nature and œconomy . . .* But, he also explains a mystery to be *a thing unknown*. And again, he tells us, *a mystery is something unintelligible, or any thing more than the sound of words*. Though he must well know, that this term signifies, not what is not at all understood, but what is not perfectly understood; which is the case of most things of any importance. . . . And so far was he, notwithstanding his own concessions, from allowing the mysteries of the gospel, that we find him frequently declaiming against them. Nay, as we have seen, he represents the law of nature enforced by revelation, as the whole of the Christian law; and the law of nature as containing nothing incomprehensible. To reconcile all this is far above my mean abilities.

5. Lord Bolingbroke says, he *may admit, that not only things inconsistent with the law of nature may be revealed, but also positive precepts*

precepts about things indifferent may thus become obligatory . . . I will not conceal, that he says, the point is not clear enough to oblige him to admit it necessarily. However, at least we may conclude, that such precepts are possible. Otherwise he could not think himself at liberty so much as to make a supposition about them. And as he has owned the sacraments to be Divine institutions, this possibility grows up into a certainty; and in order to be consistent, he must be obliged to admit the point necessarily. And this, though it will involve him in another contradiction, and quite overthrow his scheme of making the law of nature the whole substance of revealed religion.

THE reader will probably rejoice with me, that we are come to the fourteenth and last head. This relates to *the clergy, the external religion, the reformation.* As to the clergy, it is granted, that *a clergy might be useful in subordination to the civil magistrate; that Christ sent out his apostles; the apostles ordained others to succeed them; that neither they, nor their immediate successors, exceeded the bounds of their commission; that bishops were appointed by the apostles, at least in their days, to put an end to factions; that the ecclesiastical authority of the clergy was necessary before christianity was established by Constantine; that a respect for religion begat a respect for them; that as the reformation was very beneficial, so they were ecclesiastics which took the lead in it; and that our divines themselves exhort us to examine.*

All this is much for the honour of our clergy. It is owning that their commission is Divine; that they behaved without fault
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till after the first century ; that their ecclesiastical authority was necessary for two more ; that they had great merit in the reformation ; that they are even now far from desiring to lead men blindfold, or to be believed implicitly ; and that respect for religion produces naturally respect for them . . . From whence one would be inclined to think, that disrespect to them, and much more such gross abuses as we have seen, especially at a time when they are peculiarly inoffensive, must proceed from, as well as lead to, a real disrespect to religion.

But his Lordship was not always in this good humour. To collect all that he has said against them in these Essays, would be to copy out a great part of them, and would be needless ; as the learned author of the *View*, &c. has been beforehand with me, and has set some of the grossest passages, and bitterest censures, of these and other learned men, very properly before his readers. I shall only here extract a few, which relate to the authority this order claims.

Vol. I. Religion may subsist and flourish too, without ecclesiastical government.

Vol. III. The ecclesiastical authority of the clergy is unnecessary and dangerous after Constantine.

p. 223. Neither presbytery, episcopacy, nor popery is *jure divino*.

p. 245. The ecclesiastical order not of Divine institution, nor by that institution independent of the state.

p. 248. Excommunication, before Constantine, was a censure, an exclusion from Christian congregations: But this censure, and this exclusion,

exclusion, operated on the imagination alone; and the punishment being imaginary, the power was so too.

The state of Christianity not mended by the reformation in all particulars.

The chimerical weapon of excommunication, forged in the chimerical fire of hell. Vol. V. P. 208.

A very few remarks will be sufficient here.

Can religion flourish in the midst of factions? Were not these, according to the noble Lord, the occasion of the erection of episcopal government? Is it not most highly probable, that they would return, if all ecclesiastical government was destroyed? Can order subsist in any society, civil or religious, without some polity? Can national religion (see head the second) be at all supported without an established clergy . . . If *Christ sent his apostles with powers to teach, baptize, &c. if these ordained others, and even appointed bishops*; surely the ecclesiastical order must be owned to be of Divine institution. These powers thus received from Christ, were neither derived from, nor dependent upon the state; I mean not so dependent, as that it can forbid, though indeed it may regulate, the exercise of them; having the same authority over the persons of those, who are invested with them, which it hath over other men. And the clergy, as well as the spiritual powers they claim, will be always, as well when religion is a civil establishment, as when it is not, useful and necessary to society and government.

An exclusion from Christian congregations is an exclusion from very valuable privileges and benefits. Reason tells us, that every society

ciety must have this power lodged in it, to exclude unruly and disorderly members. The Gospels, among other powers granted by Christ to his apostles, plainly mention this. When duly executed, for I am not pleading for any abuses of it, the future state of Christians may be affected by it; and others may be thus deterred from abusing the means of spiritual improvement. Indeed if hell be a chimerical notion, the punishment of excommunication can be no other than imaginary. But they, who seriously consider and fear the one, can have no slight notions of the danger of the other. If the Christian ordinances, and the communion of the faithful, be, as most undoubtedly they are, helps towards working out our salvation, every wise and good man must be most solicitous to preserve his right to them. And if this should be forfeited as a consequence of any open crimes, we ought to endeavour immediately to be restored to them; but surely ought not contemptuously to despise such authoritative exclusion from them; which only shews the mind to be hardened, and is the way to increase every bad disposition.

When Lord Bolingbroke says, the state of Christianity was not mended by the reformation, in all particulars, his words are ambiguous; and I am at a loss to know, whether his meaning was, that the reformation was defective, or that it was in some respects injurious to our religion. This latter cannot be said with any shew of truth. Many errors in doctrine and worship were thus discovered and removed; but no new ones

ones introduced hereby. At least, if any were entertained by private persons, who have separated from the church of Rome, this ought not to be imputed to the reformation. Though these errors came after it, they were not caused by it As to the other sense, we may truly boast, that our religion was so far reformed, as to be a compleat rule of life and manners ; and to be free from every error and every practice, which may be dangerous to salvation. And this should incline us thankfully to adhere, and honestly to conform, to it ; knowing, that if we were to go on reforming, as long as any person is, or pretends to be, dissatisfied, we should soon have no religion at all.

2. Our noble author farther grants under this head, *the usefulness of places set apart for public instruction and public worship ; that synagogues secured the observance of the law ; that the decent performance of church services cannot fail to inspire an awful respect, and to maintain a devout attention of mind, in the generality.* I would beg, that this may be particularly observed : And if we could be so happy as to find our Christian worship and service regularly and universally attended, I dare say, that such awful respect, such devout attention, would soon end in the increase of sound religion, and real virtue, among us ; and we should become, in every respect, a wiser and a happier people.

HAVING now finished my intended Analysis of the late Lord Bolingbroke's Philosophical Works, I shall leave it to the reader to consider, whether he had any right
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to say, as he does, Vol. II. p. 392. *my way of thinking, which I have found no where the least reason to alter.* If this was his real opinion, we must say at least, that his memory very frequently failed him.

However, I find his Lordship uttering another sentence, which, tho' by no means universally true, is too much verified in these works; and which I think so highly worthy of notice, that I shall conclude this tract with it.

Vol. II. GREAT MEN TAKE GREAT LIBERTIES, AND EXPECT TO BE BELIEVED ON THEIR WORDS.



FINIS

